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ABSTRACT

This study explored white students' level of racial/ethnic identity development and whether pre-college characteristics and patterns of participation in curricular and co-curricular activities influenced identity development. This research focused on white students who attended a predominately Hispanic community college. Racial/ethnic identity development theory served as a framework for understanding student development. One hundred fifty students returned a mail survey that included Phinney's Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure and demographic questionnaire. Quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that a majority had not explored their racial/ethnic identity. Participants' age, gender, socioeconomic status, high school racial composition, or participation in curricular or co-curricular activities influenced development. Implications of the research are also discussed. The author concludes that students in this study showed low awareness and concern for racial/ethnic differences and were ignorant of the implications of their whiteness. Therefore, the ability to reach its mission to prepare students to become informed citizens and leaders is questionable. Recommendations for the host institution included examining faculty and administrative cultures, assessing campus climate, and creating avenues to promote racial/ethnic identity development. Recommendations for student affairs and suggestions for further research are provided. Appended are copies of the cover letter, consent forms and questionnaire. (Contains 73 references.) (RC)

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ABSTRACT

WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AT A TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION

By

Pilar Helene Ellis

May 2002

This study explored White students' level of racial/ethnic identity development and whether pre-college characteristics and patterns of participation in curricular and co-curricular activities influenced identity development. This research focused on White students who attended a predominantly Hispanic community college. Racial/ethnic identity development theory served as a framework for understanding student development.

A mail survey that included Phinney's Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure and a demographic questionnaire was returned by 150 students. Quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that a majority had not explored their racial/ethnic identity. Participants' age, gender, socioeconomic status, high school racial composition, or participation in curricular or co-curricular activities did not influence development.

Implications of the research are discussed. Recommendations for the host institution included examining faculty and administrative cultures, assessing campus climate, and creating avenues to promote racial/ethnic identity development.

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Recommendations for student affairs and suggestions for further research are provided.

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When I decided to make a career change and pursue a master's degree I had no idea of the significance of my journey. The Student Development in Higher Education program caused me to reevaluate several aspects of my life and allowed me to grow in ways I had not considered. I have had the opportunity to form relationships that were an asset to me as I progressed through the program. I have enjoyed this adventure and I look forward to the future.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction

California community colleges are an integral part of California's educational system that also includes the California State University (CSU) system and the University of California (UC) system. They are also among the oldest and largest in the country (Knoell, 1997). Students who enroll in community colleges enjoy lower tuition fees and less restrictive financial aid requirements than students who are enrolled at CSU or UC schools. Community colleges serve their surrounding neighborhoods by providing personal enrichment courses, basic skills classes, English as a second language programs, vocational education, and as a gateway to the CSU and UC systems (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Knoell, 1997). Easy access and a wide range of programs and services position community college as an important component of the educational system.

Demographic changes and overcrowding in the CSU and UC systems has caused many students to enter higher education in California through community colleges (Jamilah, 2001; Rendon & Hope, 1996). As a result, the student populations at community colleges reflect the racial and ethnic make up of the surrounding area. Such a diverse setting challenges students to develop personally as well as academically as they are exposed to new relationships, experiences, and ideas. In particular,

Pascarelli and Terenzini (1991) reported that it is "the diversity of individuals (particularly other students) that developmentally challenges students' conceptions" (p. 190). The variety that is inherent in the student population at some community colleges could provide unique opportunities for holistic student development through coordination between classroom and co-curricular activities.

As a means to bridge the gap between academic and co-curricular experiences, the student development profession has introduced theories to describe how students develop (Boyer, 1987, as cited in Komives & Woodard, 1996). These theories fall into four categories: 1.) psychosocial theories which focus on development over the life span, 2.) cognitive structural theories that describe how individuals make meaning, 3.) person-environment theories that illustrate the effect of the environment on the individual, and 4.) typology theories that explain individual differences and their effects on development (Knefelkamp, Widick & Parker, 1978).

The concept of identity development has been the focus of psychosocial theories and, according to Chickering and Reisser (1993), identity development is a central task for students to accomplish during college. It is the foundation for developmental tasks later in life. Chickering and Reisser (1993) stated that development involves:

> 1) comfort with body and appearance, 2) comfort with gender and sexual orientation, 3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, 4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, 5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, 6) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and 7) personal stability and integration. (p. 49)

Identity develops through interaction with other such as parents, family, social institutions, and one's culture (Knefelkamp et al., 1978). Although parents, other family members, or authority figures are more influential during younger years, peers

and social institutions gain influence later during adolescence (Helms, 1990; Parham, 1989, as cited in Cross, 1991).

Racial and ethnic identity is a component of the broad concept of identity and is suggested in Chickering and Reisser's (1991) model as "a sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context" (p. 49). One's perception and self-identification as a member of a particular group determines racial and ethnic identity (Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990). Development occurs when psychological crises cause a shift in self-perception and changes in previously held beliefs and attitudes (Erikson, 1969). Sustained interaction with people from different racial or ethnic groups than oneself may cause crises (Helms, 1990). In fact, Chickering and Reisser (1993) proposed that as students develop mature interpersonal relationships, they are more likely to respect differences in close friends and make favorable generalizations to people from other cultures. The racially and ethnically diverse environments of many community colleges might promote such a shift to occur as new experiences, perceptions, and ways of interacting with others challenge students to think and behave differently.

This study focused on the racial and ethnic identity development of White community college students who attended a predominantly Hispanic institution. Perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of White students are important areas of study due to increased racial and ethnic diversity in the general population of the United States and the effects of globalization. White college students have been shown to hold negative attitudes toward students of color (Sedlacek, 1985) and world events challenge higher education institutions to promote concepts of understanding, tolerance, and pluralism. The racially and ethnically diverse environments of community colleges in southern

California are microcosms in which to explore the dynamics of White racial/ethnic identity development.

Problem Statement

Few research studies have been conducted on the racial and ethnic identity development of college students (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Research concerning community college students has examined topics such as peer relations, transfer, non-traditional aged students, underrepresented students, and women (Maxwell, 2000; Ortiz, 1995; Twombly, 1993). While there is some research on the identity development of students who attend community colleges (Glover, 2001), none are specific to the racial/ethnic identity development of White students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore White students' level of racial/ethnic identity development and whether development was related to their pre-college characteristics and patterns of involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities. As the number of students of color who attend community colleges in California continues to grow, a "minority majority" trend at some colleges may offer White students opportunities to become aware of racial and ethnic differences and evaluate what it means to be White (Carter, 1991). Research suggests that diverse educational settings promote student development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Findings from this study might provide insights into the environmental supports and barriers to White students' racial and ethnic identity development.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the levels of racial/ethnic identity development among White students as measured by scores on the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992)?

2. Is there a significant difference in MEIM scores based on age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition?

3. Are MEIM mean scores statistically different for White males and females?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference between White male and female mean scores based on age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition?

5. Are MEIM scores related to participation in curricular and co-curricular activities that incorporate multiculturalism and diversity?

Hypotheses

1. White students will possess varying degrees of racial/ethnic identity as measured by Phinney's (1992) MEIM since each student's experience with other racial groups is unique.

2. Based on prior research (Carter, 1991), female scores will indicate a higher degree of racial/ethnic identity development than that of males.

3. Students aged 18-25 will score higher on the MEIM than students aged 26 and above. Younger students may have more experience living in multicultural environments than older students due to the increased racial and ethnic diversity of southern California.

4. Students of lower socioeconomic levels will score higher on the MEIM. Typically, members of various socioeconomic levels are segregated by neighborhood (Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000). White students who live in racially mixed neighborhoods are more likely to have interracial friendships (Seligman, Bledsoe, Welch, & Combs, 1996) and may possess greater understanding of racial differences.

5. Students who attended racially mixed high schools or schools populated predominantly by students of color will score higher on the MEIM. White students who have had opportunities to form friendships with students of color may possess a greater awareness of racial and ethnic differences.

Definition of Terms

Studies of racial and ethnic identity development may use terms that have different meanings among researchers. Consequently, the following definitions attempt to provide a common frame of reference between the author and the reader.

Ascribed identity

A subjective term used in experimental studies of racial and ethnic identity that refers to the group identity the researcher defines or observes as most important (Cross, 1991).

Attitudes

A set of interrelated beliefs about a particular group or situation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Culture

"Values, beliefs, linguistic expression, patterns of thinking, behavioral norms, and styles of communication which a group of people has developed to assure its

survival in a particular physical and human environment" (Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996, p. 382).

Dependent variable

Mean scores on the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992).

Diversity

"The tangible presence of individuals representing a variety of different attributes and characteristics, including culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation" (Komives et al., 1996, p. 381).

Ethnic identity

A construct which includes self-identification as a group member, commitment and a sense of belonging to the group, positive evaluation of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in activities and traditions of the group" (Phinney, 1990, p. 503).

Ethnicity

A non-biologically defined "group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage (customs, language, religion, and so on) passed on from generation to generation" (Casas, 1984, as cited in Helms, 1990, p. 4).

Independent variable

Gender, age, socioeconomic status, high school racial composition, and participation in curricular and co-curricular activities at Cerritos Community College.

Multicultural

"Of, relating to, reflecting, or adapted to diverse cultures" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1999, p. 749).

Race

A group of people who possess "a definite combination of physical characters of genetic origin, the combination of which to varying degrees distinguishes the sub-group form other sub-groups of mankind" (Casas, 1984, as cited in Helms, 1990, p. 3).

Racial identity

"A sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group" (Helms, 1990).

Racial consciousness

"The awareness that (socialization due to) racial-group membership can influence one's intrapsychic dynamics as well as interpersonal relationships" (Helms, 1990, p. 7).

Racism

This term consists of three concepts initially reported by Jones (Bowser & Hunt, 1996): individual racism, institutional racism, and cultural racism.

Individual racism. The belief that people of color are inferior to White people. Perceptions of inferiority result from physical traits which are believed to be determinants of "(inferior) social behavior and moral or intellectual qualities, and . . . that this inferiority is a legitimate basis for inferior social treatment of black people (or people of color) in American society" (Jones, 1972, as cited in Bowser & Hunt, 1996, p. 2).

Institutional racism. "The established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities in American society . . . whether or

not the individuals maintaining those practices have racist intentions" (Jones, as cited in Bowser & Hunt, 1996, p. 2).

Cultural racism. The "conscious or subconscious conviction that white Euro-American cultural patterns and practices as reflected in economics, music, art, religious tenets, and so forth, are superior to those of other visible racial/ethnic groups (i.e., Native, Asian, Hispanic, and Black Americans)" (Jones, as cited in Bowser & Hunt, 1996, p. 3).

Reference group orientation

The degree to which particular racial and ethnic groups guide one's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors (Helms, 1990).

Values

An individual's cultural preferences and practices regarding what is "desirable, important, and worthy of esteem" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 270).

White Identity

Awareness and knowledge of racial and ethnic differences that are "intimately related to whether or not a person is racist, antiracist, or somewhere in between" (Bowser & Hunt, 1996, p. xvii).

Assumptions

This study assumed that students who choose to participate were healthy, over the age of 18, and without learning disabilities that might hinder their understanding of the questions posed by the data collection instruments. It was also assumed that participants were not recent immigrants to the United States and were not international students. In addition, the researcher believed that participants lived in the surrounding

neighborhoods of Cerritos Community College. Phinney's (1990) model of racial/ethnic identity development was assumed to accurately describe the development of community college students. Finally, it was assumed that participants reported their perceptions honestly when completing the questionnaire and that their scores and responses representing the stages of Phinney's (1990) model would vary.

Scope of the Study

This study sought to explore White racial/ethnic identity development, background characteristics, classroom experiences, and co-curricular activities to identify patterns in development. Background characteristics included the participants' gender, age, socioeconomic status, and racial composition of the high school they attended. Involvement on campus was determined by self-reported participation in curricular and co-curricular activities.

While studies of White identity development have been examined within the context of predominantly White four-year residential institutions (Carter, 1990; Helms, 1984/1990; Phinney, 1990), this researcher found no research that pertained to White students who attended community colleges in which they were the minority population. Consequently, Cerritos Community College was chosen as the research site because the majority of the students there are Hispanic. Furthermore, the background characteristics that White students bring with them to college, combined with classroom and co-curricular experiences, may influence their racial and ethnic identity development. After examining the data, this study might lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of identity development at a predominantly Hispanic two-year institution.

Summary

The increasing number of students who choose to pursue higher education has caused the role and function of community colleges in California to evolve. No longer do these institutions focus solely on vocational training. Cohen and Brawer (1996) reported that community colleges serve several functions such as academic transfer preparation to four-year institutions, vocational/technical education, continuing education, remedial education, and community service. Community colleges that are diverse may provide opportunities for White students to have greater interaction with students from different racial and ethnic groups. Perhaps, through minority status, White students may develop an awareness of racial and ethnic differences.

Chapter 2 includes literature regarding adult and student development theory, racial and ethnic identity models, and research that investigated the relationship between White racial/ethnic identity development and other constructs. Studies that attempt to promote racial/ethnic identity development in higher education institutions are also examined. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the study including the research setting, participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures. Results of the data will be presented in Chapter 4. The study will conclude with a discussion of findings and recommendations in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to explore White students' level of racial/ethnic identity development and whether development was related to their pre-college characteristics and patterns of involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities. To provide a framework for White racial/ethnic identity development, this chapter discusses theories of adult development, student development, and a review of various models of racial and ethnic identity development. Studies that investigate the relationship between White identity development and other constructs are illustrated, as well as studies that explore the promotion of White identity development in higher education institutions.

Discussion of Terms

Fundamental to the discussion of identity development are the terms culture, race, and ethnicity. Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1993) note that there has been much confusion in the general public and in the counseling profession about definitions of these terms. Linton (1968, as cited Atkinson et al., 1993) defines culture as, "the configuration of learned behavior and results of behavior whose components and elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society" (p. 5). Consequently, if a society shares and transmits behavior, then it has a culture (Atkinson et al., 1993). Other researchers describe culture as a complex combination of values,

beliefs, assumptions, language, patterns of thinking, behavioral norms, history, and traditions developed by a group of people (Komives & Woodard, 1996; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991; van Gennep, 1961).

Race has been defined in two ways, either based solely on biological and physical characteristics or by combining biological and social elements. The biological definition divides humans into a finite set of genetic groups based on physical characteristics such as skin pigmentation, head form, and facial features, to name a few (Atkinson et al., 1993; Casas, 1984, as cited in Helms, 1990). However, Anderson (1971, as cited in Atkinson et al., 1993) points out that while three basic racial types--White, Asian, and African--are commonly accepted, such terms are problematic as there is overlap within the groups and not all groups fit within these three categories.

The second definition of race, which involves both a biological and a social component, is equally slippery. Atkinson et al. (1993) note that while the term race has been applied to cultural groups whose members share little or no unique physical characteristics, the social component is dependent upon whether racial group identification is derived from within the group or is assigned by those outside the group. What people believe, feel, and think about different racial groups has an impact on their intrapersonal and interpersonal behavior (Helms, 1990; Katz, 2001; Robinson, 1999). As a result, this second definition of race takes on an added dimension of who is defining whom.

Similar to the term race, the term ethnicity also has both broad and narrow definitions. Atkinson et al. (1993) state that, in the broad sense, ethnicity is determined by cultural or physical characteristics. On the other hand, the narrow definition of

ethnicity involves group differences with respect to customs, language, religion, and other cultural factors that are not biologically defined (Atkinson et al., 1993; Casas, 1984, as cited in Helms, 1990). Still, according to Helms (1990), writers continue to use the terms race and ethnicity interchangeably.

Atkinson et al. (1993) recognize the role that both race and ethnicity play in self-identification. However, they prefer the term ethnicity to race because "it is descriptive (with regard to nationality and/or culture) but without the problems associated with defining race" (p. 8). For the purpose of research, they use the term race/ethnicity to signify groups of people who share a common ancestry and cultural heritage, but allow that individuals with the same ancestry may or may not share the same cultural values.

One's perception seems to be the most important characteristic of racial and ethnic identity development models. While racial identity development models discuss how privilege or oppression influences identity development depending on whether one is White or a person of color; ethnic identity development models do not. However, they both describe the process in terms of how an individual identifies himself or herself. Due to this common component, the term race/ethnicity will be used in this study to discuss development in broad terms whether one identifies primarily with a racial group or with an ethnic group.

Adult and Student Development

Models of racial/ethnic identity development stem from Erikson's human development model (Evans et al., 1998). This model was the first to describe identity development throughout the life span (Erikson, 1959). Erikson's eight-stage theory describes the psychosocial crises that must be resolved for a healthy personal identity to

develop. According to Erikson (1968), the developmental tasks follow a specified sequence, however the order of the stages and tasks depend on cultural and gender-related influences. Movement from one stage to another is caused by biological and psychological changes within the person and external societal demands that induce a developmental crisis (Erikson, 1959, as cited in Komives et al., 1996). Erikson defines crises as "a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation" (1968, p. 16). Typically, at the beginning and end of the life cycle, biological changes dominate the initiation of change while, during midlife, psychological and environmental factors are more prominent (Delworth, Hanson, & Associates, 1989). Komives et al. (1996) note that successful resolution of crises leads to the development of new skills or attitudes, while failure to resolve tasks affects one's ability to resolve the tasks of future stages and may contribute to a negative self-image.

Evans et al. (1998) describe the first four stages of Erikson's theory as the foundation for identity development. Stage 1 (basic trust versus mistrust) occurs during the first year of life as infants deal with issues of trust in themselves and with others. Stage 2 (autonomy versus shame and doubt) and Stage 3 (initiative versus guilt) are characterized by feelings of mastery over one's body and a pursuit of new experiences without fear. Finally, in Stage 4 (industry versus inferiority), children evaluate themselves as workers while at school. When these first four stages are resolved successfully, a child is "essentially trusting, basically autonomous, able to act and strive toward goals without excessive fear, and able to achieve capacities and attitudes which

seem necessary prerequisites to establishing identity" (Widick et al., 1978, as cited in Evans et al., 1998, p. 55).

Transition between childhood and adulthood occurs at Stage 5 (identity versus identity diffusion) when self-definition must be established. At this stage identity development has progressed from the early childhood stages, when parental relationships and body image were foremost, to the later stages where various social roles become important (Evans et al., 1998). The final three stages of Erikson's theory (intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair) deal with how one interprets love, care, and wisdom after identity formation is resolved (Evans et al., 1998). According to the model, if a person does not achieve an inner sense of identity they will be unable to develop the capacity for mature intimacy. Furthermore, the ability to develop mature intimate relationships assists individuals as they resolve issues of Stage 6, generativity versus stagnation. Erikson characterized generativity as "learning to be a caring, teaching, contributing member of one's society" (Delworth et al., 1989, p. 123). Unsuccessful resolution of this stage may cause feelings of dissatisfaction with life in later years when issues of integrity versus despair, the final stage, must be faced (Delworth et al., 1989, pp. 123-124).

As a means to empirically study Erikson's theoretical notions, Marcia (1980) developed a model of adolescent identity development. In this model, exploration and commitment are two constructs that describe identity formation (Evans et al., 1998). An exploration phase occurs when one begins to question the goals and values that have been defined by one's parents (Evans et al., 1998) and which may or may not create a crisis or decision-making period (Marcia, 1980). After a crisis period, commitment

develops as a person experiences personal investment or ownership of his or her chosen goals and values (Evans et al., 1998; Marcia, 1980).

According to Marcia (1980), individuals are able to form healthy identities by resolving crisis and developing commitments. Four modes characterize the ways in which adolescents deal with identity issues: foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium, and identity achievement. Foreclosed people are committed to goals and values that have been chosen by parents or authority figures rather than self-chosen. They show no evidence of crisis. Identity diffused types have no set goals or value systems. They have not made commitments and may or may not have experienced crisis. Individuals who are in an identity crisis are in moratorium. They are struggling with occupational or ideological issues without having made commitments. Finally, individuals who are identity achieved are those who have experienced a period of crisis, made choices, and achieved strong commitment.

Marcia (1980) stated that there were several advantages in conceptualizing identity formation into four statuses. First, each status provides a variety of styles in dealing with identity rather than Erikson's dichotomy of identity versus identity diffusion. Second, Marcia's model describes both healthy and pathological aspects of each status, except for identity achievement status. For example,

> Foreclosures may be seen either as steadfast or rigid, committed or dogmatic, cooperative or conforming; Moratoriums may be viewed either as sensitive or anxiety-ridden, highly ethical or self-righteous, flexible or vacillating; Identity Diffusions may be considered carefree or careless, charming or psychopathic, independent or schizoid. Identity achievements, for the most part, are seen as strong, self-directed, and highly adaptive. (p. 161)

Finally, Marcia (1980) found identity statuses to be relatively objective when compared to Erikson's theoretical writings. Interobserver reliability of the statuses was determined to be approximately 80% (Marcia, 1976). Perhaps, as a result of these advantages, Marcia's model of identity in adolescence has been used by other researchers to describe individual personality characteristics, patterns of social interactions, developmental aspects of identity, and identity in women (Marcia, 1980).

Like Marcia, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory of student development expands on Erikson's theory and goes on to suggest that identity development is a fundamental developmental issue during the college years. Chickering and Reisser (1993) define identity development as a series of tasks or stages, including qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and to oneself. According to their theory, seven specific tasks (vectors) must be completed successfully in order for students to resolve identity issues: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

Movement along the vectors is not a linear, stage-like process, but one in which "movement along any one vector can occur at different rates and can interact with movement along the others" (p. 34). While individual students will progress, or regress, along the vectors at different rates, it is believed that all students will eventually move along each vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The process of identity development is "a dynamic fitting together of parts of the personality with the realities of the social world so that a person has a sense both of

internal coherence and meaningful relatedness to the world" (Josselson, 1987, as cited in Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 181). This process involves: (a) becoming comfortable with one's body, appearance, gender, and sexual orientation, (b) developing a sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (c) clarifying one's self-concept through roles and lifestyle, (d) developing a sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (e) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and (f) personal stability and integration (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggest that developing a healthy identity leads to clarity, stability, and positive feelings about oneself and others. For example, when students develop mature interpersonal relationships, tolerance for racial and ethnic differences and the ability to develop mature intimate relationships increases (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Erikson (1968), Marcia (1980), and Chickering and Reisser (1993) described human development, adolescent development, and college student development, respectively. All three models touched upon the influence of culture with regard to identity development. With these models in mind, the next section discusses the various models of racial and ethnic identity development, individual development, and their similarities and differences.

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

Comparable to theories of human and student development, racial/ethnic identity theories seek to describe the various thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors individuals may employ to define themselves. In addition, literature concerning racial/ethnic identity development emphasizes the importance of crises in which

individuals reexamine previously held racial/ethnic attitudes, beliefs, and values (Cross, 1991; Hardiman, 1994; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1999). Typically, developmental crises create an emotional upheaval, which causes the person to either redefine himself or herself, regress to previous stages of development, or become stuck at a particular stage (Helms, 1990).

However, the underlying assumptions utilized to describe identity formation for people of color are different than the assumptions that underlie theories of White racial/ethnic identity development. Models devised for other racial groups attempt to explain development by considering responses to discrimination, oppression, and socialization to adopt White American norms (Cross, 1991; Phinney, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1999). Research shows that in order for people of color to form a healthy racial/ethnic identity, they must deal with the disparaged status of their group in American society and resolve the cultural differences between themselves and the White population (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1999). Although racial/ethnic identity models that focus on people of color are not the emphasis of this study, knowledge of the process may add to a greater understanding of racial and ethnic development in general.

Cross (1971/1991) was the first to formulate a theory of racial identity development for Blacks during the early 1970s. His Model of Nigrescence (1971) influenced other theorists who studied racial and ethnic identity development. In general, the model describes identity development as proceeding from ignorance of one's racial and cultural heritage, to crises and immersion in one's culture, to incorporation and formulation of a new identity.

According to Cross (1991), people in the first stage, pre-enounter, view their race as insignificant, socially stigmatizing or as negative, and have little knowledge or misinformation about their history and culture. Whites are considered the primary reference group. Stage 2, encounter, is characterized by an event, or culmination of events, that causes the person to question his or her frame of reference, worldview, or value system. Stage 3, immersion-emersion, is a traumatic transition stage in which the person focuses solely on Black issues, literature, and organizations. This stage is characterized by increased emotional stability as Blacks become the primary reference group. Finally, Stages 4 and 5, internalization and internalization-commitment, are distinguished by feelings of security with the new Afrocentric identity.

In general, identity development for other groups of color follows a similar sequence: identification with the White culture, reexamination of previously beliefs, identity exploration, and integration (Atkinson et al., 1989, as cited in Katz, 2001). Some identity models concentrate on specific racial/ethnic groups such as Asian Americans (Kim, 1981), Latinos (Ruiz, 1990), and Native Americans (Choney, Berryhill-Paapke, & Robbins, 1995, as cited in Katz, 2001), while others seek to generalize across groups (Phinney, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1999).

White Identity Development

Sue (1981) reviewed several theories of White racial identity development and found common assumptions. First, racism was considered to be an integral component of American society and permeated all aspects of American culture and its institutions. Second, it was presumed that White people were socialized into American culture and, knowingly or unknowingly, inherited the biases, stereotypes, and racist attitudes,

beliefs, and behaviors of the society. Third, White identity development was believed to follow a stage-like sequence, which ranged from obliviousness to racial/ethnic differences to the development of an identity that was self-affirming and non-exploitive. Fourth, an individual's stage of identity development influenced the process and outcome of an interracial relationship. Finally, the most desirable stage of White identity was one in which the person became aware of White privilege, accepted Whiteness, and formed a non-defensive and non-racist identity.

Additionally, racial/ethnic identity development is composed of a sense of belonging and commitment to one's racial/ethnic group, positive appraisal of the group, interest in and knowledge about the group, and involvement in activities or traditions of the group (Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990). The quality of a person's racial/ethnic identity development may result from a combination of personal identity, reference group orientation, and ascribed identity (Cross, 1991; Erikson, 1963/1968, as cited in Helms, 1990). Personal identity concerns the general feelings and attitudes such as anxiety, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Helms (1990) defined reference group orientation as the degree to which particular racial/ethnic groups guide one's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Values, ideologies, and organizational memberships are reflections of one's reference group orientation (Helms, 1990). Helms (1990) notes that if one is Black or White, there are four possible orientations: primarily Black, primarily White, neither, or both. In experimental studies of racial/ethnic identity formation, ascribed identity is subjective and refers to the group identity that the researcher defines as most important (Cross, 1991). The term is subjective in that "the experimenter 'sees' that the subject is

'physically' Black and presumes, therefore, that Blackness is, or ought to be, the subject's self-defined or personally affirmed group identity" (Cross, 1991, p. 124).

The constructs of personal identity, reference group orientation, and ascribed identity vary independently (Helms, 1990). For example,

> the "assimilating" Black (i.e., the Black person who wants to become a nondistinguishable member of White society), for instance, might feel good about herself or himself (i.e., positive personal identity), consider her or his racial-group membership to be irrelevant to her or his life circumstances (e.g., marginal ascribed identity),while attempting to live according to "White" beliefs about the world (i.e., White reference-group orientation). Similarly, a "melting pot" White (i.e., the person who believes everyone should be defined by the tenets of White socialization experiences) might feel good about herself or himself (i.e., positive personal identity), use Whites as a reference group for defining appropriate behavior (i.e., white reference-group orientation), and feel a commitment only to other Whites (i.e., White ascribed identity). (p. 6)

Finally, racial/ethnic identity development may change over time as individuals reexamine aspects of their racial and ethnic identity which may result in a return to earlier stages of development (Parham, 1989, as cited in Phinney, 1996). Such recycling through stages of development is directly influenced by family, community, and societal experiences (Phinney, 1996). Furthermore, the influences that affect identity development are salient at different times in a person's life. For example, during infancy and early childhood, identity development is influenced most by parents and authority figures, while later in life reference groups and social institutions are most influential (Parham, 1989, as cited in Cross, 1991).

Models of White racial/ethnic identity generally are grouped as either stage theories or typology theories. Stage theories describe the ways in which individuals sequentially move through various levels of development. Each stage builds on the experiences of the previous stage until the highest level is reached. Typology theories

seek to classify individuals based on their attitudes and behavior toward members of other races. Categories are not necessarily related to one another and movement between categories is not explained. This section will describe several stage and typology models of racial/ethnic identity development in detail.

Phinney

Expanding on the work of Marcia (1980), Phinney's (1989) model focuses on the extent to which people explore the meaning of race and ethnicity and the degree of commitment one has to a particular racial or ethnic group. Unlike other White racial/ethnic identity models that focus on how Whites develop a non-racist identity, Phinney (1989) developed a stage model of Ethnic Identity Development in an effort generalize the identity development process across racial and ethnic groups. "It is clear that each group has its unique history, traditions and values; yet the concept of a group identity, that is, a sense of identification with, or belonging to, one's own group, is common to all human beings" (Phinney, 1990, p. 158).

According to Phinney (1992), self-identification with the group, positive attitudes toward the group, and a sense of belonging are the fundamental components of identity development. Self-identification refers to the racial/ethnic label one chooses for oneself. It is different from the label that is determined by one's parentage and may differ from ethnicity (Singh, as cited in Phinney, 1990). Phinney states that self-identification is a necessary precondition for identity and "should be explicitly assessed in order to avoid confounding ethnic identity with ethnicity" (Phinney, 1990, p. 158). Positive attitudes toward one's group include feeling good about one's racial/ethnic heritage and being happy with group membership. A sense of belonging to the group is

an extension of positive attitudes toward the group. Phinney suggests, however, that individuals who describe themselves by a particular racial/ethnic label may vary in their sense of belonging to the group, their attitudes toward the group, their involvement in social and cultural activities with group members, and in their understanding of the meaning of their race and ethnicity. Consequently, she does not consider identity to be a static condition, but one that varies with individual experiences and with the historical and social contexts of one's group (Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1999).

Similar to Marcia's (1980) stages of identity formation, Phinney's (1990) model is composed of diffusion-foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. The first stage, diffusion-foreclosure, is characterized by a lack of exploration of one's ethnicity. Individuals at this stage have not thought about racial/ethnic identity (diffuse) or their racial/ethnic views are based on the opinions of others (foreclosed). The second stage, moratorium, involves identity search as individuals seek to understand what race and ethnicity mean to them. This search may take place as a result of a single experience or culmination of several experiences that forces an awareness of racial and ethnic differences (Phinney, 1990). The final stage, identity achievement, results in a clear, confident, and internalized sense of one's ethnicity. However, Phinney concurs with Parham (1989, as cited in Phinney, 1990) that the process of identity achievement may be cyclical over time as life experiences move individuals to explore and rethink the role and meaning of their racial/ethnic identity.

Phinney (1992) developed an instrument to measure racial/ethnic identity across various ethnic groups. The Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (1992) was

created to determine students' self-identification, sense of belonging, attitudes toward their racial/ethnic group, and attitudes toward other racial/ethnic groups. The instrument was found to be useful in measuring the levels of identity development for particular racial/ethnic groups and in comparing similarities and differences between groups (Phinney, 1992). The MEIM and a demographic questionnaire are employed in this study to collect data regarding White students' racial/ethnic identity levels.

Helms

Helms' White Identity Model (1990) depicts the complex interactions between an individual's attitudes, emotions, and behaviors (Evans et al., 1998). The model is composed of two phases of development and six statuses. Phase One, abandonment of racism, consists of contact, disintegration, and reintegration statuses. Phase Two, evolution of a non-racist White identity, is composed of pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy statuses.

Movement from one level to the next is a result of emotional and psychological discomfort Whites feel as they gain new awareness of the consequences of racism in society (Helms, 1992). Positive or negative resolution of crises promotes progress or retreat in the development of a non-racist White identity (Hardiman, 1994; Helms, 1992). Helms (1984) contends that positive resolutions are "associated with greater personal adjustment and better interpersonal relationships with people of other races" (p. 155). Helms (1992) stated that growth occurs during crisis periods between statuses. In addition, individuals could become stuck at a particular status or possess characteristics from more than one status due to maturation, life experiences, or environmental factors.

In the contact status, Whites are oblivious to their racial group membership and disregard the race of others. Often they "perceive themselves as color-blind, completely free of prejudice, unaware of their own assumptions about other racial groups" (Tatum, 1997, p. 95). Individuals move to the next status, disintegration, when denial of racial differences no longer works. Disintegration is characterized by confusion and growing recognition of racism and White privilege. To lessen the psychological tension the person will distort reality, or "blame the victim" of racism, and enter the next level, reintegration. This status is marked by stereotypical thinking and feelings of fear and anger directed toward people of color. The individual believes the White race to be superior and movement from this status to the pseudo-independent status "requires a catastrophic event or a series of personal encounters that the person can no longer ignore" (Helms, 1992, p. 31). The pseudo-independent individual has an intellectual acceptance of racial differences but does not consciously admit the responsibility of Whites in maintaining racism.

As Whites endeavor to find a positive self-definition, feelings of guilt and shame begin to fade, and they enter immersion/emersion. This status "involves an active exploration of racism, White culture, and assimilation and acculturation of White people" (Helms, 1992, p. 33). The last status, autonomy, represents an internalization of a positive White identity. People at this status actively confront racism and oppression while seeking experiences that develop their humanitarianism toward others despite racial differences.

Hardiman

Working independently from Helms, Hardiman (1994) presented the first model of White Identity Development. Her model describes a five-stage process Whites go through as they develop a non-racist identity. The model assumes that development is situation-specific and issue-specific, and that a person may be in more than one stage at a time.

Stage 1, no social consciousness, is characterized by the lack of a sense of being a member of a particular racial group beyond obvious physical and cultural differences. During the next stage, acceptance, the White person "has received and accepted the messages about racial group membership and believes in the superiority, or 'normalcy', of Whiteness and White culture and the inferiority of people of color" (Hardiman, 1994, p. 125). This stage is demonstrated passively and actively. Passive acceptance involves an unconscious identification with being White. Active acceptance, on the other hand, is illustrated by overt expressions of the belief that Whites are superior.

Transition to Stage 3, resistance, occurs as the White person encounters information that conflicts with his or her previous beliefs. At this stage, Whites passively or actively reject their earlier notions of Whiteness. Those who passively resist have an awareness of racism, but lack changes in behavior. Active resistors take ownership in perpetuating racism and realize that they have internalized racial prejudice, misinformation, and lies. As a result, active resistors feel a responsibility to change the White community and their peers who are still in the acceptance stage. Transition to the next stage occurs as Whites seek to redefine Whiteness in non-racist terms.

At the redefinition stage, Whites focus more on themselves, their racial group experiences, and affirming the positive aspects of White culture. Their efforts in challenging racism are more proactive than reactive. Transition takes place when Whites are able to put their redefined values, attitudes, and beliefs into practice. The final stage, internalization, involves integrating the redefined identity into all facets of identity so that non-racist attitudes and behavior become spontaneous expressions of self.

Sue and Sue

Sue and Sue (1999) have adapted their model of Racial/Cultural Identity Development to apply to Whites. Their model consists of five stages similar to those of Helms' (1990) and Hardiman's (1994). Stage 1, conformity, focuses on ethnocentric attitudes and beliefs, little awareness of racial differences, support for social stereotypes, and feelings of denial. Stage 2, dissonance, results from the White person's recognition of inconsistencies between upholding non-racist values and his or her contradictory behavior. This stage may elicit guilt and shame as Whites become aware of their role in perpetuating racism. Stage 3, resistance and immersion, is characterized by questioning previous beliefs and feeling intense guilt, shame, and anger. During this stage, Whites may either accept the role of the paternalistic protector of people of color or over-identify with another racial group (Helms, 1984; Ponterotto, 1988, as cited in Sue & Sue, 1999). At Stage 4, introspection, the intense feelings begin to subside and Whites begin to define a new identity. Stage 5, integrative awareness, indicates the emergence of a non-racist White identity. "There is increased knowledge of sociopolitical influences as they affect race relations, increased appreciation for cultural

diversity, and an increased social commitment toward eradication of racism" (Sue & Sue, 1981, p. 116).

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson

Rowe, Bennett, and Atkinson (1994) conceptualized a typology model of White Racial Consciousness that was developed as a result of the problems they perceived with Helms' (1990) model. They assert that the process of racial/ethnic identity development is not comparable to identity development for people of color, that Helms' model does not describe how Whites develop attitudes toward other Whites, that the stage model concept contains too many developmental exceptions, and that the Black-White conceptualization is too limiting (Rowe et al., 1994). The authors believe their model of White Racial Consciousness avoids the problems of Helms' (1990) model. It "describes White attitudes more accurately, predicts relationships better, and provides a more stable base for assessment" (Rowe et al., 1994, p. 133). White racial consciousness is defined as "one's awareness of being White and what that implies in relation to those who do not share White group membership" (Rowe et al., 1994, pp. 134-135). Adapted from Phinney's (1990) model of ethnic identity development, the model of White Racial Consciousness consists of two statuses, achieved and unachieved, and seven attitude types.

Those who hold attitudes of unachieved status have not explored racial issues or made a commitment to their beliefs. Attitude types of this kind are described as avoidant, dependent, and dissident. Avoidant types ignore the significance of racial issues both with respect to themselves and to people of other races. Dependent types base their racial attitudes on the opinions of others, such as family members. Dissident

types are often in transition and are uncertain about racial issues and their sense of racial consciousness.

Achieved statuses require some exploration of racial concerns and a commitment to some beliefs (Rowe et al., 1994). Dominative types exemplify ethnocentric perspectives that justify the dominance and oppression of other races. Conflictive types oppose overtly racist or discriminatory practices, however they oppose programs designed to reduce discrimination. Reactive types are aware of how Whites benefit from and promote discriminatory attitudes and practices. Integrative types value a culturally pluralistic society and have integrated a pragmatic sense of what it means to be White.

Summary of White Identity Models

A discussion of the commonalties among racial/ethnic identity models was given as structure for the discussion of White racial/ethnic identity development theories. The following five models of White racial/ethnic identity development were presented. Phinney's (1990) model, developed to generalize identity development across racial and ethnic groups, consisted of three stages: diffusion-foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. Helms (1984/1990), Hardiman (1994), and Sue & Sue (1999) developed other stage models in which Whites progress from obliviousness to racial differences to the development of a non-racist identity. Finally, a typology model by Rowe et al. (1994) discussed identity types as achieved or unachieved. Whether White racial/ethnic identity models explain development as stages or types, the highest level of development is assumed to be one in which individuals are able to accept race as a positive aspect of themselves and others. Yet,

since Whites are the dominant race in American society, they generally can avoid environments that challenge their racial attitudes and induce development (Helms, 1984).

Relationships to White Identity Development

Research has been conducted to examine the relationship between White identity development and other variables. Scholars have investigated the relationship between racial/ethnic identity attitudes and self-esteem, student development constructs, personality constructs, racism, and various educational and vocational settings. Most studies have been quantitative in nature and focus on college students who attend four-year universities, high school students, and the general public. Findings have been inconsistent and very little research has been replicated.

Phinney and Alipuria (1990) and Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz (1997) found that identity development was related to self-esteem. Phinney and Alipuria (1990) studied college students from four ethnic groups (Asian American, African American, Mexican American, and White). The authors created a questionnaire to measure racial/ethnic identity and utilized Rosenberg's (1979) Self-Esteem Inventory. An achieved racial/ethnic identity was found to be related to higher levels of self-esteem. Findings also indicated that racial/ethnic identity search was the lowest among the White students and racial/ethnic identity was rated least important to them relative to other identities (e.g., occupational, sex role, religious, and political orientation).

A study by Phinney et al. (1997) utilized scores from the MEIM (1990) and Rosenberg's (1986) Global Self-Esteem Scale. The authors found that the more committed and positive students felt about their racial/ethnic group membership, the

higher their self-esteem. Also, it was hypothesized that the importance of racial/ethnic identity for White students was a result of their minority status within their schools. The authors concluded that race and ethnicity might be more salient aspects of identity for White students in this type of environment. However, later research has refuted this hypothesis (Pellebon, 2000).

Another study examined the relationship between racial identity attitudes and the development of mature interpersonal relationships and autonomy described by Chickering (1969). Taub and McEwen (1992) surveyed 135 White female students who completed the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS) (Helms, 1990), the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory (Winston & Miller, 1987, as cited in Taub & McEwen, 1992), and the Developing Autonomy scale of the Student Development Task Inventory-2 (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1979, as cited in Taub & McEwen, 1992). Two significant positive correlations were found: pseudo-independence attitudes with both mature interpersonal relationships and autonomy, and autonomy attitudes with psychosocial autonomy. The authors suggested that students' acceptance of cultural and individual differences and separation from White societal norms were characteristic of the later stages of White racial identity development.

Silvestri and Richardson (2001) investigated the relationship between White identity statuses as described by Helms (1990), personality constructs, and racism. One hundred five White college students completed the New Racism Scale (Jacobson, 1985), the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and the WRIAS (Helms & Carter, 1993). Results indicated significance among several variables: contact and extraversion, disintegration and both neuroticism and agreeableness,

reintegration and both neuroticism and openness, and autonomy and extraversion. Consequently, the authors suggest that: Ignorance of racial issues (contact) is associated with greater interpersonal interaction (extraversion); recognition of internalized racism (disintegration) is associated with greater emotional instability (neuroticism) and low self-interest (agreeableness); upholding racist attitudes (reintegration) is associated with greater emotional instability (neuroticism) and conservative views (low openness); and those at higher levels of identity status (autonomy) were more sociable and optimistic (high extraversion).

In addition, a significant relationship between identity statuses and aversive racism attitudes was found. Jacobson (1985, as cited in Silvestri & Richardson, 2001) defined aversive racism as a feeling of prejudice toward people of color based on issues such as busing, affirmative action, and public welfare as opposed to blatant prejudices based on racial group membership. Findings indicated that students in Phase One statuses held more racist attitudes than students in Phase Two statuses. Richardson and Silvestri concluded that the study upheld Helms' (1990) theory that Phase One statuses are associated with racist attitudes while Phase Two statuses represent non-racist attitudes.

Similarly, Carter (1990) explored the relationship between White identity attitudes and racism. One hundred White university students completed the WRIAS (Helms & Carter, 1990) and the New Racism Scale (Jacobson, 1985). White identity attitudes were predictive of racism although the findings differed between males and females. White males tended to score lower on the WRIAS and were more likely to

endorse racist beliefs. White females, on the other hand, reported higher scores on the WRIAS and were less likely to hold racist beliefs.

Other studies have consistently found gender differences with regard to White identity development and racism (Coopwood, 2000; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Pope-Davis, Menefee, & Ottavi, 1993; Carter & Akinsulure-Smith, 1996). Carter (1990) suggested that such differences might result from differences in the socialization of men and women. He stated that society accepts expressions of anger and resentment associated with disintegration and reintegration attitudes from men more readily. On the other hand, women may exhibit higher attitudes of pseudo-independence and autonomy due to their experiences as members of an oppressed group (Carter, 1990).

Racial/ethnic perceptions and modes of student interaction in the college environment by Black, Asian, Latino, and White students were examined by Mack et al. (1997). Mail surveys were returned from 150 college students in California from selective private universities. Surveys consisted of the MEIM (Phinney, 1992) and a questionnaire developed by the researchers to assess the social interaction patterns of students. Results for White students indicated that they lacked awareness and exploration of racial/ethnic differences, they were less likely to perceive a lack of campus activities for their racial/ethnic group, and they felt less pressure to attend ethnic events on campus than the students of color did.

Pellebon (2000) studied the relationship between ethnic identity development and both ethnicity and racial majority status at high schools. Participants were students aged 13 to 19 from four high schools. High school racial composition consisted of majority African American, majority Latino, majority White, and relatively equally

mixed between African American and White. Data collection utilized the MEIM (Phinney, 1992), the School Interracial Climate Scale (Green, Adams, & Turner, 1988, as cited in Pellebon, 2000), and demographic questions created by the researcher. Pellebon found that White students had the least developed ethnic identity of all racial/ethnic groups. Additionally, ethnic majority status had no significant influence on ethnic identity development. He concluded that groups might not have meaningful interaction simply due to propinquity and by examining the quality of intergroup interaction may be more helpful than assessing the effect of racial composition alone.

Researchers have investigated White racial identity attitudes and reactions to work situations using Helms' (1990) model. Block, Roberson, and Neuger (1995) found that participants' higher levels of racial identity attitudes were related to more positive reactions to interracial situations at work and that lower levels were associated with more negative reactions.

The relationship between racial attitudes and environmental factors in the general population has been examined using telephone surveys and census data. Findings by Jaret and Reitzes' (1999) nationwide, random, telephone survey supported the hypothesis that racial/ethnic identity was more important to people in diverse settings than in homogeneous settings. White participants in the study stated that their racial/ethnic identity was more salient in public settings (e.g., work environments) and in neighborhoods that were composed of over 23% people of color. Furthermore, census data suggested that Whites who lived in low-education environments expressed higher levels of racism (Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000). In addition, Oliver and

Mendelberg (2000) found that interracial competition for resources shaped White attitudes based on specific policies such as housing desegregation and jobs programs.

Promoting White Identity Development in College

In higher education, diversity and multicultural education has been the avenue with which educators have challenged students' attitudes about racial/ethnic identity issues. Appel, Cartwright, Smith, and Wolf (1996) state that diversity and multicultural initiatives have focused on "comprehensive efforts to alter the ethos of institutions to better educate a diverse cohort of students for an increasingly complex and interconnected global society" (p. ix). Appel et al. (1996) contend that such initiatives seek to address the deeply entrenched patterns of behavior in institutions and individuals. Moreover, some educators have blatantly defined diversity and multicultural education as anti-racist education (Amster, 1994). To this end, higher education institutions have focused on the impact of diversity initiatives, curriculum, and peer group interaction on White students' awareness of racial differences and commitment to racial understanding.

Citing a lack of research, Piland, Hess and Piland (2000) examined community college students' experiences with multicultural and diversity education. The authors conducted an exploratory investigation at seven community colleges in southern California. Findings indicated that community college students, particularly women, wanted multicultural and diversity courses. Furthermore, the authors noted that White male students needed the experiences most to enhance their understanding of racial/ethnic differences.

In a literature review addressing the impact of diversity initiatives on student learning and experiences in college, Appel et al. (1996) concluded that a perception of institutional commitment to diversity and to student learning about diversity was "a powerful determinant of student satisfaction and of commitments to racial understanding" (p. x). The authors found that students who were involved in programs on campus or in the classroom that dealt with issues of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation showed positive outcomes. In particular, Astin (1993), Villapando (1994, as cited in Appel et al., 1996), and Springer, Palmer, Terenzini, and Nora (1995, as cited in Appel et al., 1996) found that students who participated in workshops and courses related to diversity and multiculturalism experienced greater satisfaction with their education, increased cultural awareness, and an increased commitment to promoting racial understanding.

In addition, Lopez (1993, as cited in Appel et al., 1996) conducted a longitudinal study of the impact of intergroup contact and coursework dealing with racial/ethnic changes in student attitudes. Findings indicated that coursework had the most positive impact on student attitudes toward educational equity. Another study found that peer teaching and informal discussions were also effective teaching strategies for bringing about changes in student attitudes (Ortiz, 1995).

Racial attitudes of White students generally have been negative toward students of color (Chang, Witt, Jones, & Hakuta, 2000; White & Sedlacek, 1985). White and Sedlacek (1885) stated that successful campus programming that is aimed at creating a positive multicultural environment required work with White students, faculty, and staff. Toward this end Sedlacek and Brooks (1976) developed a six-stage model for

eliminating individual and institutional racism. Stages include: (1) cultural and racial differences; (2) understanding how racism operates; (3) measuring racial attitudes; (4) sources of racial attitudes; (5) setting clear goals for change; and (6) strategies for bringing about change. They believe this model could provide the basis for change at colleges and universities.

White students' participation in predominantly White sororities and fraternities had a negative affect on openness to diversity (Pascarella, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996, as cited in Appel et al., 1996). Yet, Coopwood (2000) found that the Greek system contributed to the identity development attitudes of female freshman.

Finkel and Bolin (1996) and McIntyre (1997) studied how teacher education programs affect White identity development. Finkel and Bolin used discussions, oral and written research reports, video presentations, readings, and case studies to integrate concepts from Helms' (1990) racial identity theory into the curriculum. An end of semester survey indicated that students felt they had gained an increased understanding of class, race, and gender issues and that the theory integration had made the course more interesting, enjoyable, and educative. McIntyre suggested that awareness of racial inequality and sustained change in racial attitudes required a structured teaching experience in an urban environment with students from diverse racial and ethnic groups. The experience also should be long term and supported by mentoring for the teachers in training.

White teachers face the difficulty of examining racial issues with classes made up only of White students (Crowley-Long, 1995). Crowley-Long (1995) recommended strategies such as discussing affirmative action, analyzing the media, and inviting guest

speakers. Ongoing discussions and debates were found to be the most important elements that assisted the author and her students to discover their biases and to explore alternate frames of reference.

Research has shown the peer groups are responsible for much of the socialization that takes place on college campuses (Milem, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Antonio (1999) conducted a longitudinal study of diverse friendship groups and concluded that friendship group diversity was positively related to both interracial interactions outside the friendship group and a stronger commitment to racial understanding. Residence halls were found to be environments in which diverse friendships could be cultivated. Antonio suggested that higher education institutions should encourage students to take advantage of the opportunities for interracial and interethnic socialization. "Campus communities can reduce perceptual barriers to interracial interaction and promote more cross-racial friendships" (Antonio, 1999, p. 16).

Summary

This review of the literature defined the terms culture, race, and ethnicity, presented models of adult and student development, underlying assumptions of racial/ethnic identity models, theories of White identity development, and theories of development of people of color. Phinney's (1992) MEIM and a demographic questionnaire were discussed as instruments that will be utilized to gather data for this study. Finally, studies that examined various constructs related to White identity development and strategies aimed at promoting White racial/ethnic identity development in higher education were illustrated. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology

of the study including the theoretical framework, setting, participants, data collection instruments and procedures, and data analysis techniques.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore White community college students' level of racial/ethnic identity development and whether development is related to their pre-college characteristics and patterns of involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities. Research studies rarely focus on the identity development of students who attend community colleges (Glover, 2000), and few relate specifically to White students who attend predominantly non-White institutions. As the number of students of color who attend community colleges in California continues to grow, a "minority majority" trend at some colleges may offer White students opportunities to become aware of racial and ethnic differences and evaluate what it means to be White. A possible outcome of this study may be identification of environmental supports and barriers to students' awareness of racial/ethnic differences.

The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are the levels of racial identity development among White students as measured by scores on the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992)?

2. Is there a significant difference in MEIM scores based on age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition?

3. Are MEIM mean scores statistically different for White males and females?

4. Is there a statistically significant difference between White male and female mean scores based on age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition?

5. Are MEIM scores related to participation in curricular and co-curricular activities that focus on multiculturalism and diversity?

Hypotheses for the study are:

1. White students will possess varying degrees of racial/ethnic identity as measured by Phinney's (1992) MEIM.

2. Based on prior research (Carter, 1991), female scores will indicate a higher degree of racial/ethnic identity development than that of males.

3. Students aged 18-25 will score higher on the MEIM than students aged 26 and above.

4. Students of lower socioeconomic levels will score higher on the MEIM.

5. Students who attended racially mixed high schools will score higher on the MEIM.

Theoretical Concept Underlying the Study

Using Phinney's (1990) model of ethnic identity development, this study explores the identity development of White community college students. Evans et al. (1998) stated that student development "is a positive growth process in which the individual becomes increasingly able to integrate and act on many different experiences and influences" (p. 4). In other words, development progresses from relative simplicity to complexity and incorporation. Phinney's model (1990) describes a developmental stage process that ranges from obliviousness to racial/ethnic differences to the establishment of a clear, confident, and internalized sense of one's racial/ethnic identity.

According to Phinney, an individual initially enters an exploration phase in which he or she questions the goals and values that were defined by parents or other authority figures. Later, the person develops commitments or ownership of particular goals and values. Crises may or may not occur as commitments are adopted from others or are self-chosen (Marcia, 1980; Phinney, 1990).

Fundamental components of racial/ethnic identity development are self-identification with a racial/ethnic group, positive attitudes toward the group, and a sense of belonging to the group. Furthermore, research has shown that racial/ethnic identity attitudes are a function of socialization and environmental factors (Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1999). Hence, the community college environment may provide a setting in which to promote exploration, commitment, and development of a healthy racial/ethnic identity.

Research Design

This study is descriptive and correlational in nature. It explores the characteristics and experiences of White students who attend a predominantly non-White community college. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of data gathered from the MEIM (Phinney, 1992) and a demographic questionnaire created by the researcher were employed to determine students' levels of racial/ethnic identity development and whether relationships existed between identity attitudes, background characteristics, and patterns of participation in curricular and co-curricular activities.

Setting

Cerritos Community College is located in the city of Norwalk, an urban area of Los Angeles County, California. Norwalk has been described as the most ethnically

diverse city in the United States (Microsoft Press Online). The College is "an open access institution committed to providing high-quality, academically rigorous instruction in a comprehensive curriculum that respects the diversity represented the student body and in the region" (Cerritos Community College). In addition, the mission of the institution is to provide a technologically advanced educational community in which students can pursue a variety of educational goals: attainment of an associate's degree, transfer to a four-year university, vocational degree or certificate, and to acquire or increase job skills. The College philosophy embraces diversity, innovation, and active learning (Cerritos Community College). Cerritos College seeks to prepare "individuals for full participation in a complex demographic society, as citizens and leaders, for the fulfillment of personal goals and the future of the region" (Cerritos Community College).

The communities surrounding the College mainly consist of people from racial and ethnic groups of color and is mirrored in the student population. Of the approximately 30,000 students enrolled, a majority are Latino/Hispanic (43.2%), while 13% are White/Caucasian, 9.3% are Asian, 8.1% are African American/Black, 3.8% are Philippino, and 1.2% are American Indian (Cerritos College Databook). Students of color are recruited through the Outreach and School Relations office and, according to the Cerritos College Databook, the population of White students has decreased steadily each year since 1995. However, all students are more likely to interact with White faculty and staff as Whites make up approximately 80% of full-time faculty and 55% of full-time staff (Cerritos College Databook).

In 1999, approximately 12% of the total student population was less than 21 years old (Cerritos College Databook). The Veysey Program allows high school juniors and seniors to enroll at the College and apply the credit to both high school and college requirements. Traditional aged students (18-24) usually attend classes at the College during the day while older students (25 and older) typically attend classes in the evening. Because the College has no residence halls, many students leave campus directly after attending their classes. Consistent with many community college student populations, a majority of students require extra support to increase their academic skills and to assist with educational expenses.

Participants

The Institutional Research Office at Cerritos College identified prospective subjects for this study who were enrolled full-time or part-time during fall semester of 2001. In SPSS for Windows (1999), participants were randomly selected from the population of students who identified themselves as White/Caucasian at the time they applied to the institution. Participants were aged 18 and older and resided in the communities surrounding the College. Most students did not participate in co-curricular activities with clubs or organizations on campus. Generally, students attended classes part-time, were employed, and were eligible to receive financial aid. Students varied in socioeconomic status, the quality of interaction with students of color, and in the number of semesters they attended the College.

The Researcher

The principal investigator has had one year of experience in quantitative and qualitative methods in program evaluation as an employee of Cerritos Community

College and has completed coursework as a master's degree candidate. Additionally, the author was an intern for the counseling center at Cerritos Community College for one semester. The researcher's undergraduate career was spent at a predominantly White public university in the Midwest and has only sporadically attended a community college for personal enrichment. The author is female, African American, and a native of New York. The researcher has a MEIM score of 3.78 and an Identity Achievement score of 4.00. Finally, the author's limited experience with research techniques, bias as an employee of the College, and racial/ethnic biases add to the limitations of the research.

Instruments

Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

The MEIM was designed for use with students of all racial/ethnic groups, however, in line with the focus of this study, this researcher used the instrument to gather data about White community college students only. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, Phinney's (1992) model and instrument allowed general categorization of students' attitudes and behaviors.

The MEIM (Phinney, 1992) is a 23-item, untimed, self-administered instrument that measures three stages of White racial/ethnic identity: diffusion-foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. Stages reflect attitudes and behavior of the various stages of identity exploration and commitment. The MEIM includes an open-ended response to determine participants' racial/ethnic self-identification, an item about ethnicity, and two items about parents' ethnicity for background information. For the purpose of this study, the three ethnicity items of the MEIM were omitted, however

participants were asked to identify their ethnicity on the demographic section of the questionnaire created by the researcher.

The instrument contains four subscales: affirmation and belonging, ethnic identity achievement, ethnic behaviors, and other-group orientation. The affirmation and belonging scale measures racial/ethnic pride and feelings about one's background, group membership, and attachment to the group (Phinney, 1992). Sample items include "I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to" and "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group" (Phinney, 1992, p. 172). The ethnic identity achievement scale measures the degree to which a person feels a secure sense of being a member of a particular racial/ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). Sample items include "I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs" and "I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me" (Phinney, 1992, p. 172). Phinney states that low scores indicate identity diffusion and high scores indicate identity achievement. The ethnic behaviors scale assesses involvement in social activities and cultural traditions with the group (Phinney, 1992). Sample items include "I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group" and "I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs" (Phinney, 1992, p. 173). The other-group orientation scale measures a person's attitudes toward other groups. Sample items include "I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own" and "I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups" (Phinney, 1992, pp. 172-173).

Participants use a 4-point, Likert-type scale to indicate responses to statements about attitudes ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Scores for each scale are determined by reversing negative items, summing across items, and obtaining the mean (Phinney, 1992). Scores range from 4 (high identity achievement) to 1 (low identity achievement).

Reliability. Phinney (1992) reported Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the 14-item ethnic identity scale using two samples, high school students and college students. Overall reliability for the high school sample was .81 and .90 for the college sample. Reliability for the affirmation and belonging subscale was calculated to be .75 for the high school sample and .86 for the college sample. For the ethnic identity achievement subscale reliabilities were .69 for the high school sample and .80 for the college sample. For the other group orientation scale, reliabilities were .71 for the high school sample and .74 for the college sample. No reliability was calculated for the ethnic behaviors subscale because it has only two items. However, Phinney (1992) reported that separate analyses showed that those two items increased the overall reliability of the instrument.

Validity. Phinney (1992) reported a principle factor analysis using squared multiple correlations as estimates of commonalities. Using the proportion criterion, five factors were indicated for the college sample. Upon examination, a two-factor solution was chosen because three of the factors were highly intercorrelated (.58, .58, and .59), and the remaining two seemed to be subfactors of the other-group orientation scale. The first factor, which included all ethnic identity items, accounted for 30.8% of the

variance explained; the second factor, items reflecting other-group orientation, accounted for 11.4% of the variance explained.

The factor loadings for the college sample were similar to those for the high school sample. The first factor for the high school sample accounted for 20% of the variance explained; the second factor for 9.1% of the variance explained. Phinney concluded that the results for the two samples combined suggest a single factor for ethnic identity and a separate factor for other-group orientation.

Demographic Questionnaire

The researcher created a 28-item demographic questionnaire to investigate the personal characteristics, classroom experiences, and co-curricular experiences of students. Participants were asked to respond to questions regarding their age, gender, socioeconomic status, racial composition of their high school, participation in diversity and multicultural courses, and memberships in clubs and organizations at Cerritos Community College and in their communities. The instrument was piloted on 10 students prior to data collection. No changes were made to the instrument.

Procedures

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at California Statue University, Long Beach, granted approval for this study on October 24, 2001. The Institutional Research Office at Cerritos Community College identified the population students who were enrolled during fall semester 2001 and self-identified as White or Caucasian at the time they applied to the College. The researcher randomly selected 500 students using SPSS for Windows (1999) and generated mailing labels for three mass mailings. To inform the researcher of procedures that might increase

response rates, Dillman's (1978) Total Design Method for mail surveys was consulted prior to the second and third mailings. Mailings were sent in January 2002 and data was collected during February 2002.

Initially, the researcher intended to use Helms' (1990) model of White Racial Identity Development and White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS) as the theoretical framework and data collection instrument for this study. Phinney's model and instrument were more acceptable to the Cerritos College administration because there was a concern that items on Helms' WRIAS were too provocative and did not reflect the racial/ethnic dynamics of the College. The researcher determined that Phinney's model and instrument would yield sufficient data on students' racial/ethnic identity development, though in a more general fashion. As a result, the research proposal for this study was revised and the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at California Statue University, Long Beach, granted approval on December 10, 2001.

The first mailing consisted of an endorsement letter for this research that briefly explained the research, its importance, and forthcoming information packets. The Vice President of Student Services/Assistant Superintendent of Cerritos Community College wrote the endorsement letter (see Appendix A) and her office produced copies and mailed them using Cerritos College stationery to all prospective participants. Several weeks later, 20 letters were returned to the researcher due to incorrect addresses and one person wrote to the researcher to decline participation in the research.

One week after the first mailing, a packet containing a cover letter, two informed consent forms (one for the participant to keep; one returned to the researcher),

a questionnaire, a double raffle ticket, and two return envelopes were sent to the same 500 prospective participants. California State University, Long Beach, letterhead and envelopes were used. In addition, packets were sent "bulk mail" through the mail services department at California State University, Long Beach.

The cover letter (see Appendix A) explained the purpose of the study, emphasized that any personal and demographic information provided by respondents would be held in strictest confidence, and that steps would be taken to secure, store, and later destroy data after the study had been completed. Participation in the study was voluntary. To preserve participant confidentiality, two stamped envelopes were supplied to participants in which to return the consent form (see Appendix A) separately from the questionnaire (see Appendix B). One person returned the materials and declined participation in the research.

As an incentive for participation, respondents were given the opportunity to participate in a raffle. The winning prize was a new color television with integrated VCR. To participate, respondents were required to return one side of the double raffle ticket provided in their materials packet with their completed questionnaire. No penalty was assessed for non-participation in the study or in the raffle. The raffle will be held at the Counseling Center at Cerritos Community College in June 2002. The Administrative Dean of Counseling will select the winner.

A follow-up postcard (see Appendix B) was mailed 1 week after the information packets were mailed. The postcard reminded prospective participants that a questionnaire had been mailed to them, thanked those who had already sent a response,

urged those who had not to do so, and repeated eligibility requirements for the raffle. Due to financial limitations, a second follow-up postcard was not sent.

Upon receipt of the questionnaires, response data were entered into a computer database and analyzed using SPSS for Windows (1999). A total of 150 questionnaires (30%) were returned.

Data Analysis

Independent variables for this study included age, gender, high school racial composition, socioeconomic status, and participation in curricular and co-curricular activities. The level of racial/ethnic identity development as measured by scores on the MEIM (1992) was the dependent variable. For statistical analysis purposes, socioeconomic levels were collapsed into low, middle, and upper class. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and t-tests were used to report means, standard deviations, and ranges and to investigate the relationships between independent and dependent variables. The alpha level of significance was set at .05.

Limitations

Many students are reluctant to discuss attitudes about race and ethnicity (Levine & Cureton, 1998) and may not answer items on the questionnaire honestly. Emotional and psychological discomfort may affect whether the scale is completed at all. Others may not want to take the time to complete the questionnaire or misplace the survey packet. While 20 addresses were discovered to be incorrect, packets may have been lost and never reached the intended prospective participants. The researcher did not offer to replace missing surveys.

Subjects may have attended Cerritos College for only 1 semester or attended sporadically. Information may not be reported accurately as subjects were asked to recall experiences and involvement in courses, clubs, and organizations from the past.

This study examined a small number of students within the population of White students at a large community college. Subjects self-selected and may have been more open to participating in a study that focuses on racial/ethnic attitudes than their peers. Thus, the ability to generalize is limited.

Summary

This chapter described the theoretical framework, research design, and procedures used to explore White community college students' degree of racial/ethnic identity development. The rationale for using Phinney's (1990) model and instrument was explained. Quantitative data was collected using the MEIM (1992) to determine students' levels of racial/ethnic identity development. Age, gender, socioeconomic status, high school racial composition, and participation in curricular and co-curricular activities were assessed using both qualitative and quantitative data supplied by a demographic questionnaire created by the researcher. Chapter 4 contains the research results followed by a discussion of the findings and recommendations in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore White students' levels of racial/ethnic identity development and whether development was related to age, gender, socioeconomic status, high school racial composition, and patterns of involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities. Chapter 4 presents the results of the research from this study including demographic data and statistical analysis. Questions that guided this research focused on racial/ethnic identity development levels as measured by scores on the Phinney's (1992) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), previous learning environments, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and community and campus interracial interaction.

It was hypothesized that: (1) White students will possess varying degrees of racial/ethnic identity as measured by the MEIM; (2) female scores will indicate a higher degree of racial/ethnic identity development than that of males; (3) students aged 18-25 will score higher on the MEIM than students aged 26 and above; (4) students of lower socioeconomic levels will score higher on the MEIM; and (5) students who attended racially mixed high schools will score higher on the MEIM. Findings specific to the aforementioned hypotheses and research questions will follow. Results are presented in two sections: (1) a description of the sample providing critical background characteristics and (2) findings concerning research questions and hypotheses.

Description of the Sample

Of the 500 questionnaires that were mailed for this study, 150 were returned; a 30% response rate. However, data from five questionnaires were removed from the final sample because respondents identified as other than White/Caucasian. Usable data represented a response rate of 29% and an n of 145. Data were analyzed during the month of March.

Participants represented a diverse group in terms of gender, age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition (see Table 1). However, the White students in this study were different from the general population of students at Cerritos College with regard to age and gender. Slightly over half of the students at the College are female (55.6%) and most are less than 25 years old (44.5%) (Cerritos College Databook). The study sample was composed of over twice as many females as males; 97 (66.9%) were female and 47 (32.4%) were male. The same percentage of students (35%) was aged 18-25 and over 40 years old. Seventeen students (11.7%) were 26 to 33 years old and 25 students (17.2%) were 34 to 40 years old.

Participants varied in their socioeconomic status, but none self-reported as "wealthy." A majority of participants were "middle class" (82.1%), while 8 (5.5%) were "poor" and 15 (10.3%) were "working class." An equal number of students (62) had attended high schools that were predominantly White as those who had attended high schools that were racially mixed. Only 21 had attended high schools in which the populations were predominantly students of color.

TABLE 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable and Category	f	% of n
Gender (n = 144)		
Male	47	32.4
Female	97	66.9
Age (n = 144)		
18 – 25	51	35.2
26 – 33	17	11.7
34 – 40	25	17.2
41 and above	51	35.2
Socioeconomic Status (n = 142)		
Poor	8	5.5
Working class	15	10.3
Lower middle class	32	22.1
Middle class	64	44.1
Upper middle class	23	15.9
Wealthy	0	0
High School Racial Composition (n = 145)		
Predominantly White	62	42.8
Racially mixed	62	42.8
Predominantly of color	21	14.5

Table 2 depicts the type and racial/ethnic makeup of the communities in which participants lived between the ages of 5 and 15 as well as current living situations. Most participants reported living in large cities (27.6%), small cities (24.1%), and suburban areas (30.3%). The remainder (17.3%) had lived in rural areas, large and small cities, or large cities and suburban areas. Seventy-eight (53.8%) lived in predominantly White communities, 44 (30.3%) lived in racially mixed communities, 13 (9%) lived in communities that were predominantly people of color, and 8 (5.6%) lived in various combinations of the previous three types of communities. Present living

arrangements reported included those who lived at home with parents (31%), at home with spouse or partner (33.1%), and in an apartment, condominium, or house (34.5%) but not with parent or spouse.

TABLE 2. Residential Characteristics

Characteristic	n	% of n
Residence Between Ages of 5 and 15		
Large City	40	27.6
Small City	35	24.1
Suburban Area	44	30.3
Rural Area	9	6.2
Other	25	17.3
Previous Community Racial Composition		
Predominantly White	78	53.8
Racially Mixed	44	30.3
Predominantly People of Color	13	9.0
Present Residence		
With Parents	45	31.0
With Spouse	48	33.1
Not with Parent or Spouse	50	34.5

Most participants were employed (75.9%). Forty (27.6%) were employed part-time, 66 (45.5%) were employed full-time, and 2 (1.4%) were employed both part-time and full-time. Fifty-five (37.9%) worked off campus, 7 (4.8%) worked on campus, and 1 (.7%) worked both on and off campus. Similar to the larger student population at the College (Cerritos College Databook), many White students had been enrolled at the College for several years (see Table 3). Over half (53.1%) had attended from 1 to 4 semesters, 23 (15.9%) had attended 5 or 6 semesters, and 45 (31%) had attended for

over 6 semesters. Yet, consistent with the general student population (personal communication, C. Patrick, March 22, 2002), most had not participated in ethnic studies courses (94.4%), multiculturalism courses (86.7%), or clubs and organizations on campus (87%).

TABLE 3. Enrollment and Involvement Characteristics

Characteristic	n	% of n
Enrollment at Cerritos		
1-2 semesters	39	26.9
3-4 semesters	38	26.2
5-6 semesters	23	15.9
Over 6 semesters	45	31.0
Ethnic Studies Courses		
Yes	8	5.5
No	137	94.5
Diversity and Multiculturalism Courses		
Yes	19	13.1
No	126	86.9
Co-curricular Involvement		
Yes	19	13.1
No	125	86.2

Participants reported the influence of race on their social interactions with other students at the College. Ninety-seven (67.8%) reported that race did not influence their choice of friends and social activities, 38 (26.6%) indicated that race had little influence, 8 (5.6%) indicated race had significant influence, and none indicated that race was a dominant factor. Eighty-four students (58.7%) stated that half of their free

time at school was spent with White students and half with students of color. Eight (5.6%) spent all free time on campus with students of color, 17 (11.9%) spent free time mostly with students of color, 22 (15.4%) spent free time mostly with Whites, 1 (.7%) spent all free time with Whites, and 8 participants (5.6%) spent no free time at Cerritos College.

Qualitative Responses to Racial/Ethnic Identity Development

Open-ended questions asked participants to define White racial/ethnic identity, to comment on their thoughts about racial/ethnic identity development, and to describe the ways in which they think development for White students might be promoted at Cerritos Community College. Many participants did not respond to the first question. Still, most of the students who responded defined the term as people of European descent, Anglo descent, or Caucasian. "People who are White and come from a White background." Others reported that White racial/ethic identity was a category, a label, or a description of skin pigment. "Physical features." "People with light colored skin." Some could not define the term. "I never thought about it." "I don't know." A few stated that the term was negative or connoted a racist. "White racists." "I don't have a positive feeling about white identity because of the history of racial prejudice." The remainder defined White racial/ethnic identity as "American," a mixture of European and American cultures, or as someone "better off than other cultures."

The final questions were placed at the end of the questionnaire and requested participants to describe their attitudes regarding their racial/ethnic identity development and offer recommendations for the College to promote student development. A

majority of participants did not offer a response. Those students that did respond stated that race/ethnicity was not an issue for them.

> Although I have more White friends, I have no problems with any race.
> I don't look at people by color or religion.
> I feel 'plain' with regard to race and ethnicity.
> I never gave much thought to race.

Other students reported that they did not relate to other Whites on campus. "I don't feel a connection to other Whites as a group." "I'm not very proud of my racial background. Sometimes I feel intimidated by other Whites." Some participants remarked that too much importance was placed on racial/ethnic differences. "American identity is more important." "We should stress the ways in which we are alike." Two students wrote overtly racist remarks. "All hail Aryan power!" "Whites have a better reputation . . . other races are prone to failure or negative behavior."

Many participants described feelings about the campus environment with respect to race/ethnicity. A few students noticed their minority status at the College. "Over time Whites have become a minority." "I think it's odd there are so few White students." More students related positive comments concerning opportunities for different races to learn from and interact with each other at the school.

> I was affected by the Child in a Pluralistic Society course.
> I appreciate the diversity at Cerritos.
> The computer networking classes are very ethnically diverse.
> The different ethnic groups seem to get along with each other.
> I have grown through interacting with people of color.
> Interaction with different races at Cerritos has allowed me to see past color to the inner person.
> I enjoy meeting and forming interracial friendships at Cerritos.

On the other hand, some students felt distressed while in class.

> I was upset that a Latina in class said that Whites are privileged and that she has to work harder. Other races are allowed to say whatever they want about Whites.
> Students in Black and Hispanic studies classes are prejudiced. Whites can't promote White pride.
> I didn't finish the semester because I felt uncomfortable in class . . . one Latino student was vehemently anti-White.

Furthermore, participants wrote that Whites were treated poorly outside of class.

> The African Americans are disrespectful. My White friends stay away from the food court area because they feel uncomfortable.
> Cerritos is more concerned with scholarships for Blacks and Latinos.
> The White community is being ignored.
> Cerritos caters to Latinos; there are no clubs for White students.

Finally, participants offered recommendations to the College.

> The "Wild West", colonial development, the Oregon Trail, the Gold Rush, Midwestern farm development, the "Bible Belt", etc. would be great to have offered as "fun days" at Cerritos College.
> Cerritos should offer Italian history.
> There should be more English reading programs, not ethnic studies programs.
> No programs are available for White males.

One student recommended that counselors should offer better career guidance to adult students and that the College should create a feeling of teamwork in classroom settings. "Find a way for all students to feel they have a voice no matter what the ethnicity."

In comparing qualitative responses to MEIM and identity achievement scores, participants reported more negative attitudes when MEIM scores were 2.50 and lower and when identity achievement scores were 2.43 and lower. Respondents made statements such as, "I'm not very proud of my racial background," "I don't feel a connection to other Whites as a group," "Minorities get more respect," and "I feel 'plain' with regard to ethnicity."

Racial/Ethnic Identity Development at Cerritos College

Participants possessed varying levels of racial/ethnic identity development as measured by Phinney's (1992) Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). The instrument is composed of four scales: identity achievement, affirmation and belonging, ethnic behaviors, and other-group orientation. The MEIM total score is computed by summing across three of the four scales (identity achievement, ethnic behaviors, and affirmation and belonging) and obtaining the mean. Other-group orientation scores are omitted from the calculation as attitudes toward other groups is not considered a factor in racial/ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992).

According to Phinney (1992), racial/ethnic identity development varies from low interest and awareness of racial/ethnic differences (identity diffusion) to clear and confident understanding of the meaning of race/ethnicity for oneself (identity achievement). Consequently, MEIM total scores and subscale scores range from 1 to 4, in which low scores indicate identity diffusion (low interest and awareness) and high scores indicate identity achievement (clear understanding of race/ethnicity).

Table 4 illustrates frequencies and percentages for MEIM total scores and subscale scores. Subscale scores are presented to provide a broader description of racial/ethnic identity levels for the sample. The MEIM total score mean was 2.69 (SD = .48) and scores ranged from 1.29 to 3.71. More than half of the participants (62.7%) scored between 2.00 and 2.93, 8 (5.6%) scored between 1.00 and 1.93, 38 (26.3%) scored between 3.00 and 3.71, none scored 4.00. Likewise, the identity achievement scores ranged from 1.14 to 3.71, however the mean was 2.53 (SD = .53). Ninety-three students (64.1%) scored from 2.00 to 2.86, 16 (11.2%) scored from 1.14 to 1.86, and 32

(22.1%) scored from 3.00 to 3.71. For ethnic behaviors (M = 2.27, SD = .67), 20% of students scored between 1.00 and 1.50, 55.2% scored 2.00 to 2.5, 35% scored 3.00 to 3.5, and .7% scored 4.00. Half of the sample (50.3%) scored between 3.00 and 3.80 on affirmation and belonging (M = 3.07-8, SD = .60), 33.2% scored 2.00 to 2.80, 2.8% scored 1.00 to 1.60, and 10.3% scored 4.00.

TABLE 4. MEIM Total Scores and Subscale Scores

Range	f	% of n
MEIM Total (n = 137)		
1.29 – 1.93	8	5.6
2.00 – 2.93	91	62.7
3.00 – 3.71	38	26.3
Identity Achievement (n = 141)		
1.14 – 1.86	16	11.2
2.00 – 2.86	93	64.1
3.00 – 3.71	32	22.1
Ethnic Behaviors (n = 145)		
1.00 – 1.50	29	20.0
2.00 – 2.50	80	55.2
3.00 – 3.50	35	24.1
4.00	1	.7
Affirmation and Belonging (n = 140)		
1.00 – 1.60	4	2.8
2.00 – 2.80	48	33.2
3.00 – 3.80	73	50.3
4.00	15	10.3
Other-group Orientation (n = 144)		
2.00 – 2.83	18	11.8
3.00 – 3.83	107	73.8
4.00	20	13.8

Examination of the first research question that focused on levels of racial/ethnic identity development revealed that students varied in development. But the relatively low MEIM total scores and identity achievement scores showed that participants were mainly unaware and lacked clarity in their understanding of racial/ethnic differences. Low scores in ethnic behaviors indicated that participants were not involved in social activities and cultural traditions with their racial/ethnic group. However, over half the sample felt pride and attachment to their racial/ethnic group as evidenced by relatively high scores for affirmation and belonging. In addition, other-group orientation scores, which assessed White students' attitudes toward other racial/ethnic groups, showed that participants interacted with people from other racial/ethnic groups and generally had positive attitudes toward them.

To further describe the racial/ethnic identity levels of students the researcher analyzed the mean scores for students who scored 3.00 and higher on the MEIM and identity achievement scale (see Table 5). Missing data on some subscales resulted in more MEIM total scores than identity achievement scores. Thirty-four of the respondents (23%) received high MEIM total scores. Most were aged 18-25 (41%) and self-identified as middle class (41%). Fifteen students had attended predominantly White high schools (44%) and 15 had attended racially mixed high schools (44%). Of the 30 students (20%) with high identity achievement scores, almost equal percentages were 18-25 (40%) and over 40 (33%). Eleven (37%) were middle class, and 14 (47%) had attended predominantly White high schools.

TABLE 5. MEIM and Identity Achievement Scores (3.00 and above)

Variable	Total Score		Identity Achievement	
	n	%	n	%
Age				
18-25	14	42	12	40
26-33	4	12	4	13
34-40	7	21	4	13
Over 40	9	27	10	33
Socioeconomic Status				
Poor	2	6	2	7
Working	3	9	3	10
Lower Middle	7	21	6	20
Middle	14	41	11	37
Upper Middle	8	24	8	27
Wealthy	0	00	0	0
High School Race				
White	15	44	14	47
Racially Mixed	15	44	12	40
Of Color	4	12	4	13

Variations in MEIM Scores

Question 2 asked "Is there a significant difference in MEIM scores based on age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition?" Analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to compare MEIM total scores, identity achievement, ethnic behaviors, and affirmation and belonging to the variables age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition. Results revealed no statistically significant differences among the variables with respect to MEIM total scores or subscale scores, therefore the null hypotheses were accepted. MEIM ANOVA results indicated F (30, 105) = .736 ($p > .05$) for age, F (30, 104) = .749 ($p > .05$) for socioeconomic status, and

F (30, 106) = .436 ($p > .05$) for high school racial composition. Identity achievement results were F (18, 121) = 1.070 ($p > .05$) for age, F (18, 120) = .534 ($p > .05$) for socioeconomic status, and F (18, 122) = .901 ($p > .05$) for high school racial composition. Ethnic behaviors indicated F (6, 137) = .963 ($p > .05$) for age, F (6, 135) = .1.082 ($p > .05$) for socioeconomic status, and F (6, 138) = 1.113 ($p > .05$) for high school racial composition. Finally, affirmation and belonging ANOVA results indicated F (13, 125) = .633 ($p > .05$) for age, F (13, 134) = .849 ($p > .05$) for socioeconomic status, and F (13, 126) = 1.148 ($p > .05$) for high school racial composition.

Table 6 illustrates MEIM and identity achievement scores and provides descriptive data regarding the proposed research hypotheses. Hypothesis 2 stated that students aged 18-25 would score higher than students aged 26 and older. The third hypothesis declared that students of lower socioeconomic levels would score higher on the MEIM. The final hypothesis reported that those students who attended racially mixed high schools or schools that were populated predominantly by students of color would score higher than students who attended predominantly White high schools. The null hypotheses were accepted for all statements since previous ANOVA results found that age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition had no significant influence on MEIM scores.

TABLE 6. MEIM and Identity Achievement Scores

Variable	Total Score		Identity Achievement	
	n	M	n	M
Age				
18-25	47	2.75	48	2.58
26 and older	89	2.67	90	2.51
Socioeconomic Status				
Low	18	2.68	19	2.57
Middle	77	2.69	80	2.52
Upper	21	2.85	21	2.68
High School Race				
White	59	2.71	61	2.54
Mixed or of Color	78	2.68	80	2.53

Gender Differences

Research questions 3 and 4 related to potential differences in MEIM scores for male and female participants. Descriptive data are illustrated in Table 7. t-Tests showed no statistically significant differences in MEIM scores between males and females in the sample, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. MEIM total scores revealed t (45) = -.999 ($p > .05$) for males and t (89) = .686 ($p > 05$) for females. Male identity achievement scores indicated t (45) = -1.342 ($p > .05$); female scores indicated t (93) = .997 ($p > .05$). Ethnic behaviors showed t (46) = -1.410 ($p > .05$) for males and t (96) = .997 ($p > .05$) for females. Finally, male affirmation and belonging scores indicated t (46) = .371 ($p > .05$) and female scores indicated t (91) = -.196 ($p > .05$).

TABLE 7. Mean Scores and Gender

Score	Male		Female	
	n	M	n	M
MEIM	46	2.63	90	2.73
Identity Achievement	46	2.42	94	2.58
Ethnic Behaviors	47	2.13	97	2.34
Affirmation and Belonging	47	3.11	92	3.06

Question 4 asked "Is there a statistically significant difference between White male and female mean scores based on age, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition?" Analyses were run using male total MEIM scores, female total MEIM scores, male identity achievement scores, and female identity achievement scores. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that differences were not significant, consequently the null hypotheses were accepted. Male total MEIM results indicated F (20, 21) = .788 ($p > .05$) for age, F (20, 21) = .990 ($p > .05$) for socioeconomic status, and F (20, 21) = .834 ($p > .05$) for high school racial composition. Female total MEIM results were F (25, 49) = .754 ($p > .05$) for age, F (25, 48) = .485 ($p > .05$) for socioeconomic status, and F (25, 49) = .549 ($p > .05$) for high school racial composition. Male identity achievement results were F (13, 28) = 1.373 for age, F (13, 28) = .874 for socioeconomic status, and F (13, 28) = .964 for high school racial composition. Female identity achievement results indicated F (17, 61) = .924 for age, F

(17, 60) = .558 for socioeconomic status, and F (17, 61) = .942 for high school racial composition.

The final research question asked whether MEIM scores were related to participation in curricular and co-curricular activities that incorporate multiculturalism and diversity. Because so few participants were involved in curricular or co-curricular activities (see Table 3), statistical analyses were not conducted.

Summary

This chapter provided results of the data analysis. Qualitative responses to open-ended questions were presented. A description of the sample included demographic data regarding participants' age, gender, socioeconomic status, and high school racial composition. Participants in the study were dissimilar to the general population of students with regard to age and gender. Statistical analysis revealed differences in racial/ethnic identity development levels, however no statistically significant differences were found between MEIM scores and the research variables or between male and female scores. The relationship between MEIM scores and curricular and co-curricular involvement was not calculated since a majority of students were not involved. A discussion of these results is provided in Chapter 5 along with implications for Cerritos Community College, student affairs, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore White students' levels of racial/ethnic identity development and whether development was related to age, gender, socioeconomic status, high school racial composition, and patterns of involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities. Racial/ethnic identity development was measured by the MEIM (1992). Qualitative responses from a demographic questionnaire described students' perceptions of racial/ethnic identity and related behaviors. The intention of this research was to present White students' experiences as a minority population at a community college and to inform community college educators in promoting the racial/ethnic development of their students. This chapter provides a discussion of the implications of quantitative and qualitative findings, recommendations for Cerritos College and student affairs, and suggestions for future research. Limitations of the study are provided.

Discussion

Quantitative Findings

Phinney's (1992) MEIM served as the major data source for this study. The instrument was designed to produce scores that ranged from 1 to 4. For the purpose of this study, MEIM total scores and subscale scores that ranged from 1.00-2.99 were considered "low" and scores 3.00-4.00 were considered "high." Phinney (1992) stated that low scores designated obliviousness to racial/ethnic concerns regarding oneself and

others. High scores indicated exploration of one's race/ethnicity, positive feelings about one's racial/ethnic group, and a clear understanding of the implications of group membership.

White students in this study were sorely lacking racial/ethnic identity development. The subscale, identity achievement, was used to understand students' perceptions of their racial/ethnic identity. Three quarters of the students in the sample had low identity achievement scores and over half had low MEIM total scores. Participants in this study seemed oblivious to their place in society as an individual or as a member of a privileged group. Low scores indicated that they had simply accepted societal messages about racial/ethnic group membership and believed in the normalcy and superiority of Whiteness and White culture (Hardiman, 1994).

An achieved identity is related to healthy psychological development and positive self-concept (Erikson, 1968). Likewise, Phinney et al. (1990/1997) found that higher levels of racial/ethnic identity were related to higher levels of self-esteem. Conceivably, 75% of White students in this study may have low levels of self-esteem reflective of their low identity achievement scores. The combination of low self-esteem and low racial/ethnic identity development could impair students in achieving a well-rounded education. Additionally, the institutional mission to enlighten students and enhance their quality of life is less likely to be realized.

Differences in age, high school racial composition, socioeconomic status, and gender had no influence on students' racial/ethnic identity development. No differences were found even when isolating identity achievement scores. Racial/ethnic identity formation had been hypothesized to progress over time as individuals explore and make

decisions about the role of race/ethnicity in their lives (Phinney, 1990). In this study, whether students were 18 or over 40, a majority had not developed their racial/ethnic identity. In fact, most students had been enrolled at the college for several years and still had not progressed. Identity development is an important task to achieve during the college years (Chickering & Reisser, 1993); nevertheless, students' scores indicate that development has not occurred.

It was expected that students who had attended racially mixed high schools or schools that were populated predominantly by students of color would have a more developed racial/ethnic identity. Consistent with previous research, this was not the case (Pellebon, 2000). In fact, those students who had high scores on identity achievement had attended predominantly White high schools. Since high school racial composition did not correlate with racial/ethnic identity development, students do not come to the college at a disadvantage. Consequently, during students' first year, the college should promote the expectation that students will gain cross-cultural competence. The instruction of general education courses should push students to develop their racial/ethnic identity. Additionally, since White students in this study indicated that they felt comfortable interacting with people who are from different races, the college should augment superficial interaction with more meaningful opportunities for students to have cross-racial experiences. General education classes, co-curricular programs, and intentional service-learning activities could serve as the basis for such interactions.

Though students with high identity achievement scores were primarily middle class and female, differences had no impact on levels of racial/ethnic identity.

development. Again, the college administration has the opportunity to affect profound change since students' demographic characteristics do not seem to matter. Community college students need and want multicultural experiences to enhance their understanding of racial/ethnic differences (Piland et al., 2000).

Qualitative Responses

Participants were asked to answer three open-ended questions on a demographic questionnaire for this study. The first question, designed to assess how the respondents defined White racial/ethnic identity development, was not answered by many of the participants. Of those that did, most reported that the term was a description of ancestry or a label based on physical characteristics. None described racial/ethic identity development as a process of exploration and decision-making (Phinney, 1992).

Given the low racial/ethnic identity development scores, such a response could be expected. White students were blind to the implications of their race/ethnicity and did not know or had not thought about the meaning of Whiteness and the unearned privileges granted to them. These students had bought into a system that encourages indifference to race/ethnicity and ignorance about individual, cultural, and institutional racism. They had evaded the challenges that racial/ethnic awareness brings at the expense of deeper self-knowledge and connection to others.

Fewer participants answered the second open-ended question that requested remarks on perceptions of their own racial/ethnic identity development. Students' responses suggest that they typically do not think about racial/ethnic differences, but when asked, they believe students of color are discriminating against them. Yet, White students generally had positive feelings about interactions with students of color on

campus. Helms' (1990) model of racial/ethnic identity development, described in Chapter 2, offers an explanation of this phenomenon.

According to Helms' (1990) stage model, White students at Cerritos Community College who participated in this study might be described as being in the second stage of racial/ethnic identity development, disintegration. An acknowledgement of Whiteness and recognition of the moral dilemmas that go along with being White characterize this stage. Emotional conflict, or dissonance, ensues as Whites realize they are treated differently than people of color and that negative consequences result for the White person who does not respect the inequalities (Helms, 1990). In an effort to reduce dissonance the person might avoid contact with people of color or seek information that racial/ethnic inequality does not exist (Helms, 1990). It seems probable that since White students cannot avoid contact with students of color, they chose to be colorblind to racial/ethnic differences.

In addition, to avoid an increase in dissonance, students might selectively incorporate information that gives them greater confidence in their beliefs (Helms, 1990). It appears that students in this study had not been confronted with information or experiences that caused them to question their attitudes and beliefs and promote racial/ethnic identity development. While ethnic studies, diversity, and multiculturalism courses have been found to promote racial/ethnic identity development (Appel et al., 1996), very few of the White students in this study had enrolled in them.

As noted in Chapter 4, students with low scores had ambivalent or negative feelings about their racial/ethnic group membership. These White students seemed to be in the second stage, acceptance, of racial/ethnic identity development as described by

Hardiman (1994). The acceptance stage is demonstrated passively or actively. Passive acceptance was manifest in students' statements that they are "plain" and that they do not consciously identify as White. On the other hand, Whites in active acceptance were subtly racist and believed that people of color are given opportunities that they had never had (Hardiman, 1994). For example, some students reported that Cerritos College unfairly awarded scholarships and grants to students of color and that too much emphasis was place on racial/ethnic differences.

The college should examine ways in which the curriculum could promote student development. Institutional commitment to diversity initiatives has been shown to better educate a diverse cohort of students (Appel et al., 1996). Moreover, students who are involved in courses and workshops related to diversity and multiculturalism experience greater satisfaction with their education, increased cultural awareness, and an increased commitment to promoting racial/ethnic understanding (Astin, 1993).

Attention should be given to the dynamics of passive and active acceptance as they may contribute to serious implications for the college. Generally, White students have negative attitudes toward students of color (Chang et al., 2000; White & Sedlacek, 1985) and individuals in the lower stages of identity development have been found to hold more racist attitudes and beliefs (Carter, 1990; Hardiman, 1994; Helms, 1990). Like many colleges in the United States, there seem to be unspoken racial tensions and frustrations (Boyer, 1990) that could explode at any time. White students have reported that they feel uncomfortable on campus and 1 student dropped out of a class as a result. Other students wrote racist responses on the data collection survey or complained that Latino and Black students receive all the scholarships. If the White students in this

study are representative of Cerritos College graduates, they may lack important knowledge and skills upon graduation; such deficits may prove detrimental to the individual and to society. The college administration must be proactive in its response to the powder keg in its midst.

Summary

White students in this study have little understanding of themselves as racial/ethnic beings, low self-worth, racist attitudes, and a superficial understanding of others. Helms' (1990) model and Hardiman's (1982) model of racial/ethnic identity were examined to explain students' perceptions of their development. Although students reported that they felt comfortable interacting with students of color, the quality of the interaction is questionable considering their negative attitudes and beliefs. Cerritos Community College, like most colleges and universities, is challenged to respond rather than react to negative racial/ethnic dynamics on campus. The institution must confront racist attitudes through providing avenues for White students to establish a clear and positive sense of self. This first step is fundamental to the creation of a multicultural community.

Recommendations for Cerritos Community College

White students' lack of racial/ethnic identity development cannot be underestimated. Research has shown that higher levels of development are related to higher self-esteem, increased acceptance of individual and group differences, decreased racism, greater college satisfaction, and increased commitment to promoting racial understanding (Appel et al., 1996; Carter, 1990; Phinney et al., 1997; Silvestri & Richardson, 2001; Taub & McEwén, 1992). Changes in the attitudes of White students

at Cerritos Community College must begin with institutional change. "A world of isolated, disengaged communities without interconnections and understandings is no longer an option" (Farnsworth, 2001, p. 10).

The college mission states that one of its objectives is to prepare students to become informed citizens and leaders in society (Cerritos Community College). The college must examine policies and practices to determine whether procedures are in place in all divisions of the institution to meet this objective. Community colleges have the ability to respond to constituent and community needs quickly (Culp & Helfgot, 1998). In particular, hiring practices should be evaluated so that faculty and administrative members mirror that of the student population. During 1999-2000, almost 80% of the full-time faculty were White (Cerritos College Databook).

Since a large percentage of the faculty is White, it is recommended that a study be implemented to assess their racial/ethnic identity development levels. Oftentimes White faculty members have difficulty incorporating diversity and multicultural issues into the classroom (Crowley-Long, 1995). This study could assess the degree to which racial/ethnic identity development is included in the curriculum. Furthermore, it could provide insight into the ways in which the college might assist faculty members to examine their own biases and promote practices aimed at challenging individual, cultural, and institutional racism. Ideally, faculty members should serve as role models to promote awareness and facilitate discussions of racial/ethnic differences with their students.

Faculty and administrators should examine the general education curriculum. Ethnic studies, diversity, and multiculturalism courses should not be the only exposure

to issues of White privilege, racism, and oppression that students receive. Classroom discussions, debates, video presentations, guest speakers, case studies, and oral reports have been found to be critical elements in assisting faculty and students in uncovering biases and exploring alternate perspectives (Crowley-Long, 1995; Finkel & Bolin, 1996). It is important that students are personally invested in their development and challenged to think critically about their attitudes and beliefs. Much work in this area could be done since a majority of students typically are enrolled at the institution for several years.

White students in this study felt comfortable interacting with students from other races. Furthermore, students commented that the diversity of the student population provided opportunities for them to learn about other racial/ethnic groups. The college should build on these positive attributes by promoting interracial discussion forums for students. Peer groups influence much of the socialization on campus (Milem, 1992) and student leaders from all racial/ethic groups could be recruited to get the word out. Additionally, since many students are not involved on campus, the use of technology could provide a bridge between students, faculty, administration, and the community. Radio, television, and the Internet could be utilized to promote discussions around issues of race/ethnicity.

Experiential learning is recommended to assist students to assimilate new, and often anxiety provoking, information regarding race/ethnicity. These experiences can take the form of cooperative education, internships, apprenticeships, and leadership development. Experiential learning promotes cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains of learning and shapes students' developmental potentials by presenting

opportunities for growth through integration and differentiation (Galligan, 1995). Successful models should be researched and adapted for Cerritos Community College.

With the demographic changes at the college and in California, employers increasingly expect their employees to have the skills that will allow them to successfully work in teams with people from various racial/ethnic backgrounds (C. Patrick, personal communication, October 11, 2001). Consequently, Cerritos Community College would do well to promote the importance of courses and co-curricular involvement that provide White students with the tools that will assist their success in an increasingly global society.

White students reported that they felt marginalized inside and outside of class. One student stated that some White students did not visit the food court area because students of color were disrespectful toward them. Another student dropped a class because of discomfort she felt in the classroom. It is difficult, if not impossible, for learning to take place in an environment of distrust, misunderstanding, and fear. It is recommended that a study be implemented to assess the campus climate and the long-term and short-term impact of students' negative perceptions and attitudes. Such a study could provide recommendations for developing a more inclusive atmosphere for all students.

It is also recommended that the college leadership encourage participation in the statewide Community College Leadership Institute. The institute is a network of programs and one of its many goals is to increase cross-cultural competency for students, staff, faculty members, and administrators. Knowledge and experiences gained from this endeavor would do much to change the ethos of the institution.

Recommendations for Student Affairs

Community colleges are becoming the institutions of first contact for many students entering higher education. Yet, there have been no studies that focus on the racial/ethnic identity development of this diverse group of students. Most studies of racial/ethnic identity development have occurred at predominantly White four-year residential colleges and universities. Theory and practice developed for students who attend such institutions might not be appropriate for students who attend community colleges. Student affairs professionals must develop a foundation of research, theory, and practice specific to the racial/ethnic identity development of community college students.

Furthermore, schools in California are becoming increasingly more racially and ethnically diverse. Some community colleges in California are populated predominantly by students of color. This study was implemented to explore the supports and barriers for the racial/ethnic identity development of White students at a particular community college. More work should be done by student affairs professionals to assess the outcome of minority status on White students' identity development.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study found that none of the research variables affected the racial/ethnic identity development of White students. A second study should be conducted to validate or dispute these findings. A second study utilizing a larger sample of White students, with equal numbers of males and females, may produce different results. In addition, an in-depth qualitative component may provide a better understanding of

interracial interaction among students at the college and possible effects on development.

Studies by Phinney et al. (1995) and Carter (1990) should be replicated to determine if the relationships they found between racial/ethnic identity development and self-esteem and racism also pertain to community college students. Furthermore, Phinney's model (1990) and MEIM (1992) offered only a general description of racial/ethnic identity development levels. Another study that applied a more specific stage model and instrument to measure racial/ethnic identity development for Whites should be implemented. Several models that were mentioned in Chapter 2 could be useful.

Limitations of the Study

The relatively small size of the study sample of participants is a limitation. Responses may not be representative of the attitudes of the population of White students at Cerritos Community College. Furthermore, a large percentage of students were aged either 18-25 or over 40, and more than half were female. Consequently, research results might have been skewed.

Interpretation of the MEIM (1992) results presented a second limitation. Phinney's (1990) model of racial/ethnic identity development is composed of three stages, however MEIM scores range from 1 to 4. Therefore, the researcher subjectively described scores as "low" or "high." Finally, the terrorist attacks in New York during 2001 may have affected students' responses. Participants' may have responded differently to survey items and hold more negative racial/ethnic attitudes than before the attacks.

Finally, participants' may have been confused by the open-ended question that asked for their definition of racial/ethnic identity. Though responses from the pilot study showed no foreseeable misunderstanding, respondents may have answered differently had the question been posed differently. For example, perhaps the phrase "How would you define the term White Racial/Ethnic Identity Development" should have been substituted for "How would you define the term White Racial/Ethnic Identity."

Conclusion

This exploratory study examined the influence of White students' various background characteristics and experiences at Cerritos Community College on racial/ethnic identity development. The intent of this research was to provide college administrators with a snapshot of the White students at the institution and recommendations to encourage student development. Students in this study showed low awareness and concern for racial/ethnic differences and were ignorant of the implications of their Whiteness. Therefore, the ability of the college to reach its mission to prepare students to become informed citizens and leaders is questionable. Intentional intervention by the college could promote greater interracial understanding and provide a learning environment in which all members of the campus community would benefit.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ENDORSEMENT LETTER, COVER LETTER, AND CONSENT FORM

ENDORSEMENT LETTER

Dear Cerritos College student,

I hope you are enjoying a challenging and rewarding semester. As part of Cerritos College's commitment to serve students, you have been selected to participate in an important research study. The study will be conducted by Ms. Pilar Ellis, one of our staff members with the Teacher TRAC program who is pursuing a master's degree at California State University, Long Beach. Her study focuses on ways in which your interactions within the campus community affect your social attitudes and identity development. Information gained from Ms. Ellis' study may help me enhance your experience as a student at Cerritos. This letter to you serves as an endorsement of this very important study.

During the next few weeks you will receive a packet from Ms. Ellis containing questionnaires that should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. In addition, she has arranged to raffle a color TV as an incentive for your involvement. Please read all information in the packet carefully. I realize that your time is valuable, however I urge you to participate.

Thank you and I wish you a successful semester!

Sincerely,

Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D.
Vice President of Student Services/
Assistant Superintendent

COVER LETTER

Dear Cerritos College student,

I am a graduate student at California State University, Long Beach and pursuing a Master's degree in Counseling with an option in Student Development in Higher Education. This counseling option focuses on ways in which to promote the holistic development of students attending community colleges and 4-year colleges and universities.

As my Master's thesis, I am conducting a study of community college students' social attitudes and you have been randomly selected to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary. Please be assured that any identifying information you provide will be available only to me and locked in a private office. No publication or other use of this information will identify you as a participant. All data and consent forms will be kept for three years after the study is completed before being destroyed. No information gathered will become a part of your student files at Cerritos.

Please return the enclosed consent form as agreement to participate in the study. Upon receipt of your form I will send you a questionnaire, a demographic information sheet, and a postage pre-paid envelope. All information should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

I realize that your time is valuable and I am very appreciative of your help. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 562 985 2474.

Sincerely,

Pilar H. Ellis
Principal Investigator
Social Attitudes of Community College Students

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Racial Attitudes and Identity Among Community College Students

Project Administrator: Pilar H. Ellis
M.S. Counseling, Student Development in Higher Education
College of Education, California State University, Long Beach

Purpose of Study: This study intends to identify the personal characteristics and environmental factors that influence the racial attitudes and identity of white students at Cerritos College. The results of this study could be used to design programs to enhance positive social interaction among students of various racial groups.

As a student at Cerritos Community College who self-identified as white during initial registration, you have been randomly selected as a potential candidate for this study. Through participation in this study, you will have the opportunity to share your experiences regarding personal interaction with other racial groups and classroom and co-curricular activities on campus. The completion of all enclosed materials should take approximately 20 minutes.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Agreeing or refusing to participate will have no effect on your status at Cerritos College or any rights to which you are entitled therein. There will be no consequences to participants who choose to leave individual survey questions unanswered.

To indicate voluntary participation in this study, please follow the directions below:
1. Sign the copy of this consent letter marked "Return to researcher" and return in the envelope provided marked "Consent Letter".
2. Keep the consent letter marked "Retain for your Records" for yourself.
3. Complete the Social Attitudes Scale, the Demographic and Information Form, and return in the envelope provided marked "Surveys" along with one of the raffle tickets. Please retain the other raffle ticket for yourself.

Participation in the raffle is voluntary and only those who complete the forms are eligible. Any information that is obtained for this study will remain confidential. All data and consent forms will be kept separately in a secure office at CSULB for three years after the study is completed before being destroyed. No information gathered will become a part of your student files at Cerritos Community College.

Dr. Erlinda Martinez, Vice President/Assistant Superintendent at Cerritos Community College, has endorsed this research. The only risk to you as a participant in this study that I can identify is possible discomfort that you may feel about answering questions about your perceptions of racial identity. If you have any questions or concerns about

this research, or if you would like to discuss your responses to the questionnaires, please feel free to contact me, Project Administrator, at (562) XXX-XXXX; Dr. Dawn Person, Thesis Chair, at (562) XXX-XXXX; or Carol Patrick, Administrative Dean of Counseling at Cerritos College, at (562) XXX-XXXX. In addition, for questions or issues that arise beyond the scope of my training, I will recommend services available to you on the Cerritos College campus through the Counseling Center (562) XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX and the Health and Wellness Center (562) XXX-XXXX ext. XXXX. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact the CSULB Office of University Research at (562) XXX-XXXX.

As a benefit to you, a copy of the research findings will be available at the Cerritos College Counseling Center at the end of spring semester 2002. In addition, **by returning your raffle ticket with your completed questionnaires, you will be eligible for a chance to win a 13" color TV with integrated VCR!** The raffle will be held at 2:00 p.m. on June 28, 2002 in the office of Carol Patrick, the Administrative Dean of Counseling at Cerritos. The winner does not need to be present to claim his/her prize. To find out the winning raffle ticket number please contact me at (562) XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for you participation,

Pilar H. Ellis
CSULB Master's Candidate

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures described above. I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Print Your Name

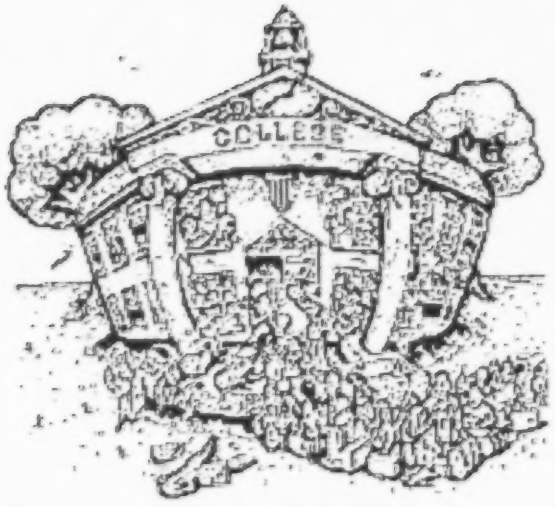
_____ _____
Signature Date

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

QUESTIONNAIRE

Identity Development and Attitudes Among Community College Students



Return this survey to:
Pilar H. Ellis
c/o Dr. Dawn Person
California State University, Long Beach
Educational Psychology, Administration and Counseling
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840-2201

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in:
In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

Instructions: Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(4) Strongly agree **(3) Agree** **(2) Disagree** **(1) Strongly disagree**

I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.

I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.

I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.

I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own.

I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.

I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.

I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together.

I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life.

I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own.

I really have not spent time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group.

I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and to other groups.

In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.

I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.

I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups.

I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.

I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups.

I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own.

I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

Another important purpose of this study is to learn more about the environment and the social interactions that may have influenced your development.

Instructions: Check each item that best describes you and your situation. Some answers require you to write a brief statement. Please answer all questions as honestly as possible.

A. Between the ages of 5 and 15, did you live predominantly in a:
(√ all that fit your situation)
____Large city
____Small city
____Suburban area
____Rural area

B. Between the ages of 5 and 15, did you live predominantly in a:
(√ all that fit your situation)
____Predominantly white community
____Mixed racial community
____Predominantly people of color community (African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific American)

C. What was the name and location (city name) of the last high school you attended?_____

D. What was the racial composition of your high school?
____Predominantly white
____Racially mixed
____Predominantly students of color (African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific American)

E. How long have you been enrolled at Cerritos College?
___1 semester
___2 semesters
___3 semesters
___4 semesters
___5 semesters
___6 semesters
___More than 6 semesters

F. How much does race influence your choice of friends and social activities at Cerritos College?
____It is a dominant factor
____Significant influence
____Little influence
____No influence

G. How much of your free time at school is spent with white students as compared to students of color?
____All with whites
____Mostly with whites
____About half and half
____Mostly with students of color
____All with students of color

H. In your own words, how would you define the term White Racial/Ethnic Identity? Please describe below.

I. Have you taken courses at Cerritos College in ethnic studies?
_____Yes _____No If yes, please list _____

J. Have you taken courses at Cerritos College in diversity and multiculturalism?
_____Yes _____No If yes, please list _____

K. Are you or have you ever been involved in campus clubs or organizations at Cerritos College?
_____Yes _____No
If yes, please check (√) all that apply:

_____Amnesty International
# of semesters_____
_____Black Student Union
# of semesters_____
_____Disabled Students of Cerritos College
# of semesters_____
_____International Student Association
# of semesters_____
_____Multicultural Alliance for Prog. and Svcs.
# of semesters_____
_____Puente Club
# of semesters_____
_____Spanish Club
# of semesters_____
_____Asian Indian Club
# of semesters_____
_____Circle K International
# of semesters_____
_____Feminist Majority Alliance
# of semesters_____
_____M.E.Ch.A.
# of semesters_____
_____Native American Club
# of semesters_____
_____Salsa Club
# of semesters_____

L. Are you or have you ever been involved in ethnic clubs or organizations in your community?
_____Yes _____No

If yes, please list
_____

M. Are you an international student? ____ Yes ____ No Country of origin
_____

N. What is your gender? _____ Male _____Female

O. What is your age? _____18-21 _____22-25 _____26-29 _____30-33
_____34-37 _____38-40 _____over 40

P. What is your race? _____ Ethnicity?_____

Q. Where do you live?
____ At home with parent(s)
____ At home with spouse/partner
____ Apartment/condo/house [not with parent or spouse]

R. Between the ages of 5 and 15, which of these terms best describes your family's socioeconomic background?
____Poor
____Working class
____Lower middle class
____Middle class
____Upper middle class
____Wealthy

S. Are you employed? _____Yes _____No

If yes, _____Part time _____Full time
_____On campus _____Off campus _____Both (on and off campus)

What is your occupation?_____

Is there anything else you would like to say about your ethnic identity development? If so, please use this space for that purpose.
Also, any comments you wish to make about ways in which your ethnic identity development might be promoted while you are attending Cerritos Community College will be appreciated, either here or in a separate letter.

****

Thank you for completing this survey. Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated. A summary of the research findings will be available for you to pick up at the Cerritos College Counseling Center at the end of spring semester 2002. To voluntarily participate in the raffle, please enclose one of the tickets with your completed survey. Remember to retain the other for prize claiming purposes when the raffle is held in June 2002. There will be no penalty for non-participation in the raffle.

Likert-type ethnic identity items created by Jean S. Phinney
Questionnaire and items A through S designed by Pilar Helene Ellis

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

January 21, 2002

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinion about identity development and attitudes was mailed to you. Your name was drawn from a random sample of students who attend Cerritos Community College.

If you have already completed and returned it to me, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because it has been sent to only a small, but representative, sample of Cerritos students it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent the perceptions of Cerritos students.

Remember, by returning your consent letter, completed questionnaire, and raffle ticket you are eligible to win a 13" color TV/VCR. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Pilar H. Ellis
Project Administrator

APPENDIX C

RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY MODELS

TABLE 8. Stages of Ethnic Identity Development (Phinney, 1990)

Sequence	Stage Title and Description
Stage 1	Diffusion-Foreclosure Unexamined ethic identity ▪ Diffusion – Lack of interest in or concern with ethnicity ▪ Foreclosure – Views on ethnicity based on opinions of others
Stage 2	Moratorium Ethnic identity search ▪ Exploring and seeking to understand the meaning of ethnicity for oneself
Stage 3	Identity achieved Committed ethnic identity ▪ Clear, confident sense of own ethnicity

TABLE 9. Phases and Statuses of White Racial Identity Development (Helms, 1990)

Phase One: Abandonment of Racism
Status 1: Contact ▪ Obliviousness to own racial identity
Status 2: Disintegration ▪ First acknowledgement of White identity
Status 3: Reintegration ▪ Idealize Whites and denigrate Blacks
Phase Two: Defining a Non-racist White Identity
Status 4: Pseudo-independence ▪ Intellectualized acceptance of own and others' race
Status 5: Immersion/Emersion ▪ Honest appraisal of racism and significance of Whiteness
Status 6: Autonomy ▪ Internalized, multicultural identity with non-racist Whiteness as its core

TABLE 10. Stages of White Racial Identity Development (Hardiman, 1990)

Sequence	Stage Title and Description
Stage 1	No Social Consciousness ▪ Lacks a sense of being a member of a particular racial group beyond obvious physical and cultural differences
Stage 2	Acceptance Accepts stereotypical messages about racial groups ▪ Active Acceptance - overt expressions of the belief that Whites are superior ▪ Passive Acceptance - unconscious identification with being White
Stage 3	Resistance Occurs as the White person encounters information that conflicts with previous beliefs about race ▪ Active Resistance - ownership in perpetuating racism and realize that they have internalized racial prejudice, misinformation, and lies ▪ Passive Resistance - awareness of racism, but no behavioral changes
Stage 4	Redefinition More focus on self, racial group experiences, and affirmation of the positive aspects of White culture ▪ Racism challenged in a more proactive than reactive way ▪ Whiteness redefined from a non-racist perspective
Stage 5	Internalization Internalization and integration of new identity ▪ Identity is integrated and redefined into all facets of identity so that non-racist attitudes and behavior become spontaneous expressions of self

TABLE 11. Stages of Racial/Cultural Identity Development (Sue & Sue, 1999)

Sequence	Stage Title and Description
Stage 1	Conformity ▪ Ethnocentric attitudes and beliefs, little awareness of racial differences, support for social stereotypes, feelings of denial
Stage 2	Dissonance ▪ Some guilt and shame elicited from recognition of inconsistencies between upholding non-racist values and contradictory behavior
Stage 3	Resistance and Immersion ▪ Questioning of previous beliefs ▪ Intense feelings of guilt, shame, and anger
Stage 4	Introspection ▪ Intense feelings begin to subside and Whites begin to define a new identity
Stage 5	Integrative Awareness ▪ Emergence of a non-racist White identity

TABLE 12. Unachieved and Achieved Attitudes of White Racial Consciousness (Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994)

Unachieved Attitude Types
Avoidant Types ▪ Ignore the significance of racial issues both with respect to themselves and to people of other races
Dependent Types ▪ Base their racial attitudes on the opinions of others
Dissident Types ▪ Often in transition and uncertain about racial issues and their sense of racial consciousness
Achieved Attitude Types
Dominative Types ▪ Exemplify ethnocentric perspectives that justify the dominance and oppression of other races
Conflictive Types ▪ Oppose overtly racist or discriminatory practices, but also oppose programs designed to reduce discrimination
Reactive Types ▪ Awareness of how Whites benefit from and promote discriminatory attitudes and practices
Integrative Types ▪ Value a culturally pluralistic society and have integrated a pragmatic sense of what it means to be White

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